

SINCE 1842

# THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

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Summer 2001

## Summer in The City

Hot Fashion and  
Square Mile Style

**CELESTRIA NOEL  
PREVIEWS  
THE SEASON**

**FLOWERS  
BY DESIGN**  
London's  
hippest hand-ties

**CHAMPERS  
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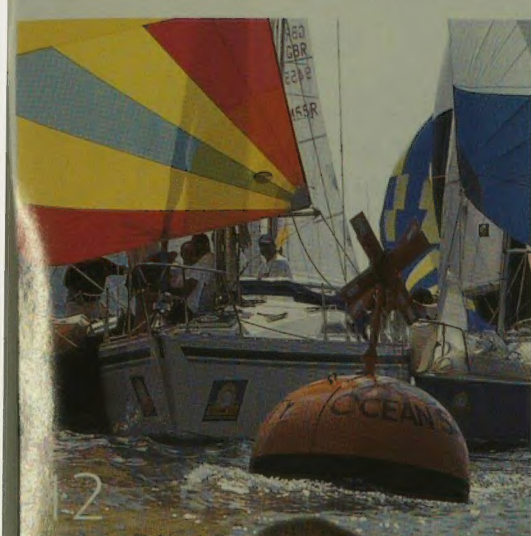
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Demand for property in central London is booming. David Spittles visits the hot spots fast becoming *the* places to live.





## editorial

The logo of *The Illustrated London News* shows a view of the City, heaving with frenetic riverside activity. That was 1842; now, one and a half centuries later, the Square Mile is still London's most dynamic, change-wielding part of town. The powerhouse of modern Britain, it is where fortunes are made and mislaid—and now the excitement of the trading floor is spilling out of the offices and on to the streets. There's a new buzz about living, eating and breathing in the City. No longer do its denizens decamp to other parts of town to let off steam—it's all happening right here on their doorstep.

This summer, postcodes with an "E", are definitely the ones to head for. Both within the City itself and on its fringes, this is the place to savour cutting-edge cuisine, to invest in live/work warehouse apartments, to admire the dazzling steel-and-glass edifices by architects such as Norman Foster, or to hang out at YBA gallery openings. Exclusive health spas and gyms are vying with new designer shops for that 1 o'clock slot. And, even late into the evening, stylish bars and hip clubs are bringing the party set to spots that only a year or so ago echoed to the sound of lone footfalls.

But despite this issue's focus on the City, the ILN has kept its eye on the broader summer picture. Join us, with Celestria Noel, as we meet the people who put the sparkle into The Season—the ones who keep everything in tip-top shape, from the racecourses to the glossies' social pages. Be inspired by futuristic floral art, as Brigid Keenan introduces the hottest new flower stylists. Or crack open a bottle of the lightest, freshest champagne: Fiona Beckett selects the cuvées you'll want to serve with all those warm-weather dishes. And finally, don't miss our Top Tickets guide to the summer's best events and activities. We've done all the hard work and have selected only the very best. Now all you have to do is pick up the phone and get booking.

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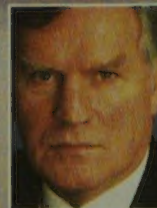
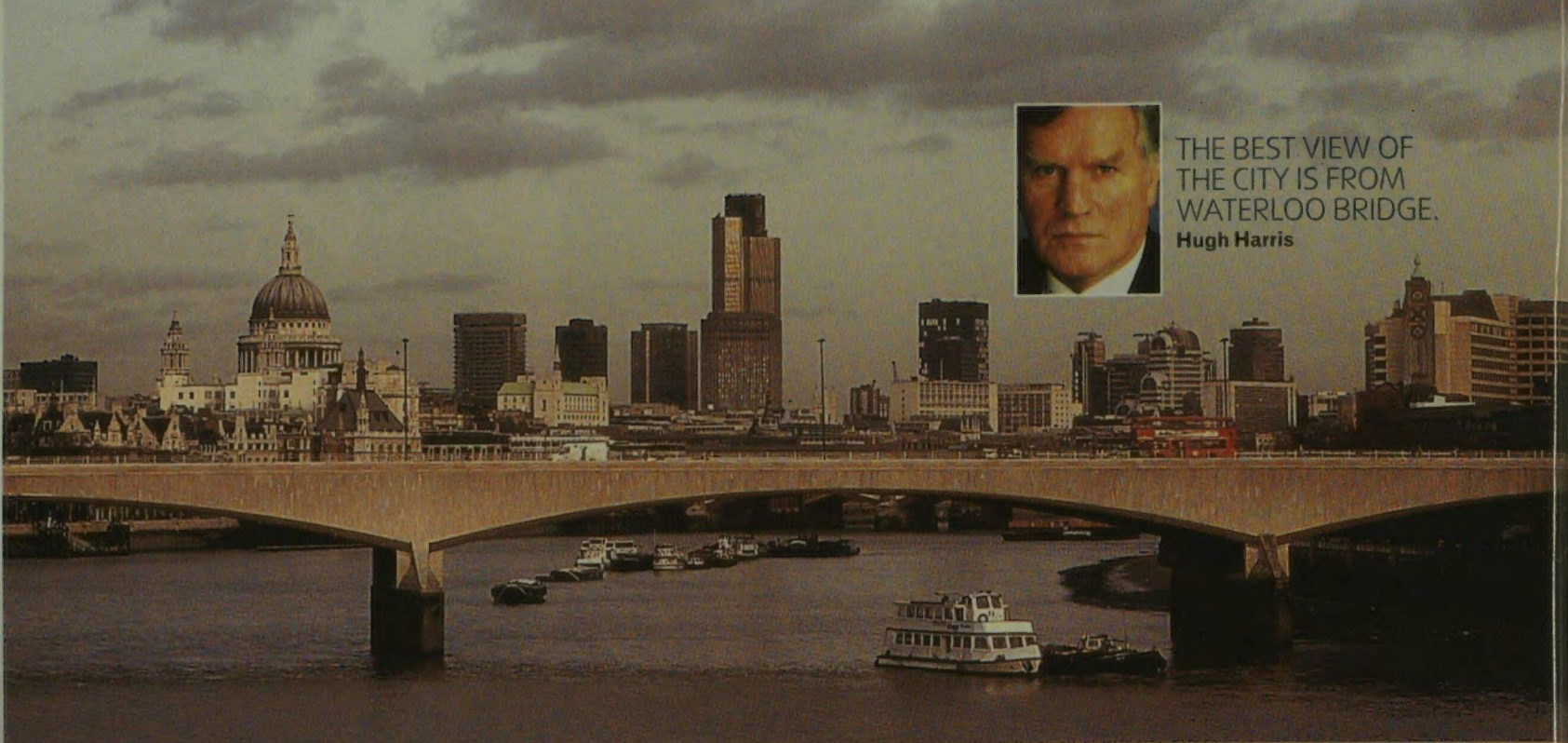
A selection of seasonal entertainment.

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THE BEST VIEW OF  
THE CITY IS FROM  
WATERLOO BRIDGE.  
**Hugh Harris**

# Insider feelings

A cross section of City people share their views on life within the Square Mile.

**Graham Sheffield** has been artistic director of the Barbican centre since 1995 and is responsible for the centre's programming. He was previously music director of the South Bank Centre.

**Hugh Harris** is director of London First Global Network and has spent 35 years working in the City.

**John Speight** has been a butcher in the City for 40 years. He has worked at Butcher and Edmunds in Leadenhall Market for 30 of those.

**Judith Dagworthy** is a public relations consultant and City resident. She moved to the City from Chiswick with her husband two years ago.

**Judith Mayhew** is special adviser to the chairman of Clifford Chance and also City and business adviser to the Mayor of London.

**Mark Wippell** is a partner in the corporate department of international law firm Allen and Overy.

**Nils Pratley** is editor of Sunday Business.

**Phil Jeffrey** is the manager of private members' club The GE Club at the Great Eastern Hotel at Liverpool Street.

**What, for you, encapsulates all that's best about the City?**

**GS** The juxtaposition of the pre-historically old and the new.

**HH** Its compactness, variety, lively halls and churches, and its sense of history.

**JD** It's uplifting. I love the buildings, the sound of the church bells, the buzz of the people during the day and the quiet at weekends.

Plus we have culture at the Barbican—and wonderful libraries. I love the cleanliness, and the fact that one feels very safe here.

**JS** It's always busy, something different happens every day. You get to see lots of people. You can never be lonely.

**JM** It's compact and it has the feeling of a coherent village but it also has the buzz of a large financial centre. It's also nice to have medieval street patterns mixed with wider, more modern ones.

**NP** The fact that its higgledy-piggledy layout has not changed in centuries. The buildings in New York are more startling but you can't beat the sense of history in London. St Paul's, viewed from the South Bank, is a magic ingredient.



MORE PEOPLE  
ARE MOVING INTO  
THE CITY. IT HAS  
BECOME MORE  
HUMANISED AND  
LESS ORWELLIAN.  
**Graham Sheffield**



ANDREW CLIMLEY

**PJ** It's very quiet at weekends and late in the evening. It's very well lit, is incredibly beautiful and feels secure. By 10pm most people have gone home.

**What's your favourite view of the City?**

**GS** Barbican lakeside on a summer day. It's everything people don't associate with the Barbican—tranquil and peaceful.

**HH** From Waterloo Bridge.

**JD** The one from our flat over the Scales of Justice at the Old Bailey and to the London Eye beyond. We can even see camera flashes going off inside the pods. My other favourite view is from Paternoster Square to St Paul's. The buildings have all been pulled down and at the moment you have this wonderful, uninterrupted view of Wren's masterpiece.

**JM** From the top floor of Tate Modern looking over to the City (see picture above). It's also wonderful to see the new wobbly bridge. My other favourite view is from the walkway on top of Tower Bridge—there are stunning views both up and down the river.

**MW** The view from Battersea Park, opposite Cheyne Walk, when I am running there.

**NP** It's hard to beat the view from the 22nd floor dining room at Dresdner Kleinwort Wasserstein on Fenchurch Street. Unilever ►





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Judith Dagworthy

also has an enviable terrace above its headquarters at Blackfriars.

**PJ** From Vertigo in Tower 42 on Old Broad Street. It's a champagne bar, and on a clear day you can see right across London—from the Dome to the Houses of Parliament and Hackney.

#### What's the best building in the City?

**GS** The Barbican, of course. It's a visionary piece of architecture. It's strong, has a defined identity and it's impossible to be indifferent about it. It's beautiful but not in a cosy way.

**HH** St Paul's.

**JS** St Paul's or The George and Vulture pub in St Michael's Alley. It was where Charles Dickens wrote his books.

**JD** The Lloyd's building when it is lit up at night. It looks sensational.

**JM** My favourite old building is the Guildhall because it's dramatic and has been added to create a central heart of the City. I particularly like the new gallery but the Victorian addition also works well. My favourite new building is the Lloyd's building. It gives the sense of the excitement of the City as a modern financial centre.

**MW** The interior of St Stephen's Walbrook.

**NP** The Guildhall—an absolutely stunning space.

**PJ** Number One Poultry which is a large, modern pink office building. It is just beautiful modern architecture. I also find our hotel really beautiful—it has a lot of heritage.

#### And the worst?

**HH** Bucklersbury House.

**JS** That new Lloyd's building. It's disgraceful. It looks like an oil refinery. The old building was beautiful.

**JM** The nasty buildings on Gresham Street which are being pulled down—the small groundscrapers. There is also a dreadful building by the Tower of London which is all boarded up now.

**MW** The 1950s office blocks around Moorfields Highwalk.

**NP** The NatWest Tower, or whatever it's called



THE WORST CITY BUILDING IS THE NATWEST TOWER. IT WILL ALWAYS SAY 1970S TO ME.

Nils Pratley

these days; however many times they rebrand it, it will still say 1970s to me.

**PJ** Parts of Broadgate are very 1980s and unattractive.

#### Where's the best place to escape to in the City?

**GS** Spitalfields market because it has that bohemian Left Bank feel. I like the roughness of it.

**HH** Inside a Wren church.

**JS** There's a church in Gracechurch Street with a few benches and trees around it—you can sit there and relax in summer.

**JD** Postman's Park which is near Little Britain. There used to be an enormous mail depot nearby and the postmen used to rest in this park. It's only small but it has grass, trees and a small covered area with a wall of lovely blue tiles. Each one commemorates somebody who died doing a noble deed in the 1700s and 1800s. It's very beautiful but sad.

**JM** It's a secret garden by the tower of Bow Bells (attached to Wren's church of St Mary-le-Bow) which has a marvellous garden full of wonderful shrubs and trees which is lit up at night. Occasionally the vicar allows me in.

**MW** Who needs to escape?

**NP** Downstairs at The Bleeding Heart. It doesn't feel like a City restaurant and the cellar is superb. Tapas at Moro in Exmouth Market is another great way to unwind.

**PJ** Coq d'Argent restaurant which is on the top floor of Number One Poultry. There is a garden on the roof and in summer you can lounge around out there on cushions.

#### If you could change one thing about the City what would it be?

**GS** To open some cheaper restaurants. We are not all on £250,000 plus bonuses.

**HH** A better use of the riverbank for recreational/leisure purposes.

**JS** The roads. There aren't any short cuts any more. It's all one way. You used to be able to nip down a backstreet, no hassle, get your deliveries done on time, but not any more.

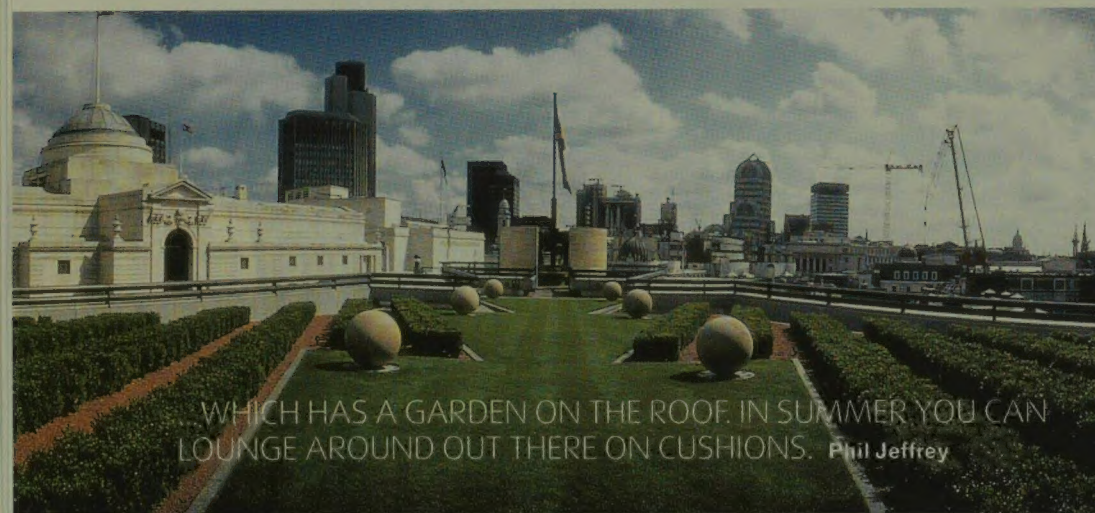
**JD** I'd reduce the level of pollution and create more parking spaces for disabled people. It would also be good if there were a little more grass around.

**JM** The traffic congestion and constant digging of holes in the roads. The congestion is something we have to deal with and that means improving public transport.

**MW** Put it in the West End.

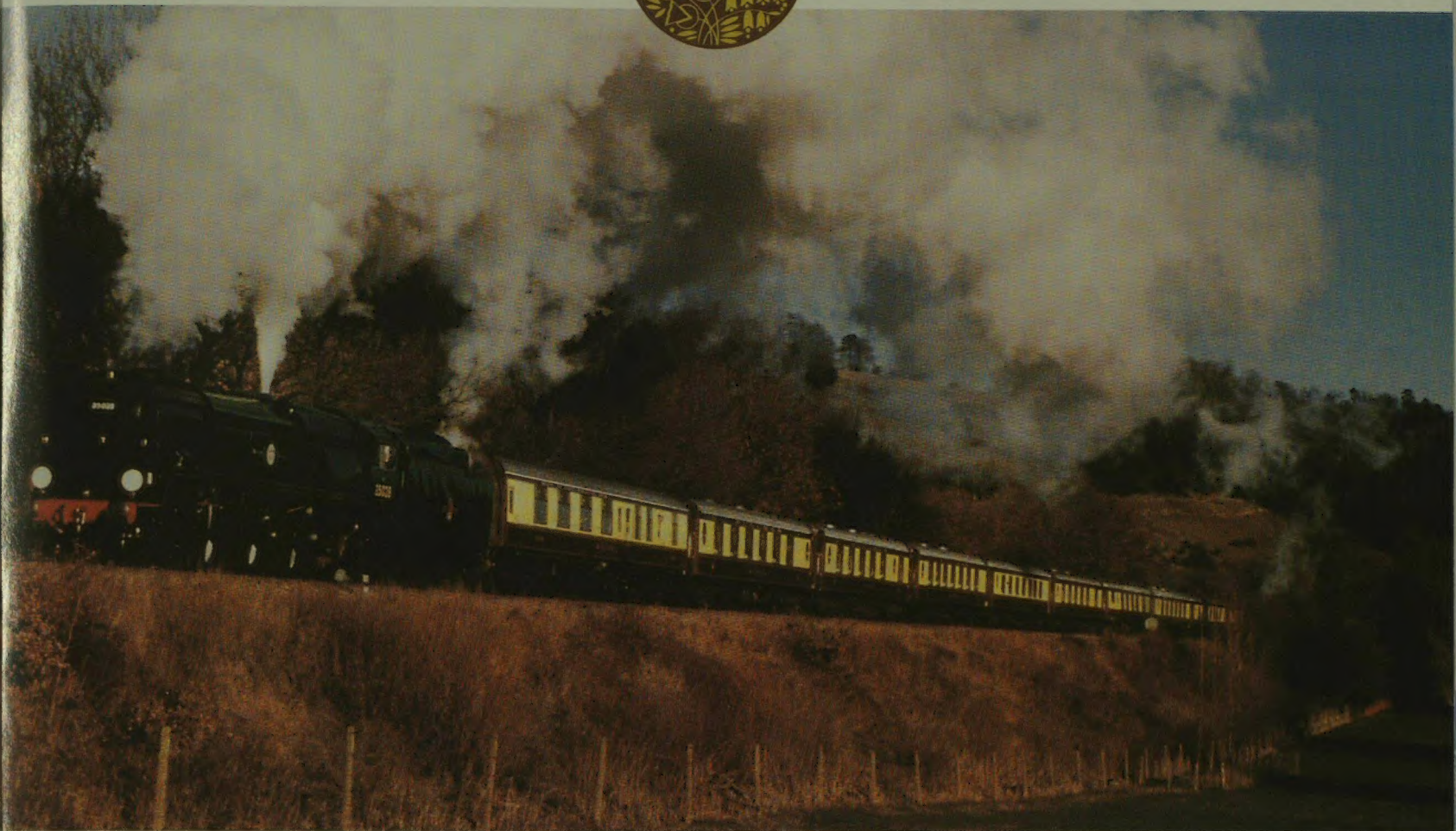
**NP** The traffic. The bottleneck around

TOP LEFT: CHRIS BASSON/NEW TOP RIGHT: ARCAD



WHICH HAS A GARDEN ON THE ROOF. IN SUMMER YOU CAN LOUNGE AROUND OUT THERE ON CUSHIONS. Phil Jeffrey





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MUSEUM OF LONDON



RENO FRONTON/ARND

THE AREA AROUND SPITALFIELDS HAS DEVELOPED AND ADDED NEW LIFE TO THE CITY. **Phil Jeffrey**



THE CITY IS MORE COSMOPOLITAN—THE BARBICAN, THE MUSEUM OF LONDON AND THE LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ARE ALL HERE.

**Judith Mayhew**

Moorgate is a regular source of exasperation. Plus the lack of black cabs late at night.

**PJ** I'd get more people to come and live in it. It's very much a Monday to Friday, 9 to 5 sort of space. People come in on the train and leave on the train and don't stick around.

#### How has the City changed since you have worked in it?

**GS** It has got better. More people are living in or around it—it has become more humanised and less Orwellian. There is more life at weekends. They are knocking down the worst buildings and it's becoming a more pleasant environment.

**HH** People work harder and more purposefully—it has changed for the better.

**JS** It's just offices now. They've pulled down all the nice, old buildings and they're putting up these modern ones. And the market's not the same any more. If I went back 20 years I wouldn't be able to talk—there'd be a queue of customers and I'd be too busy.

**JD** The traffic has got better and there are more good retail outlets such as Marks & Spencer, Gap and Austin Reed.

**JM** It has become more lively, cosmopolitan, and more confident. It now sees itself as Europe's financial centre and looks out at the world with confidence. Statistics show we are now number one in international finance in the world. There are many more restaurants, bars and shops. It operates 24 hours a day. Plus, the Barbican, the Museum of London and the London Symphony Orchestra are all here.



LSO AT THE BARBICAN BY ALEX VON KÖNIG

**MW** For the better. It has definitely improved, there are more restaurants and it has a lot more buzz than it used to.

**NP** It's certainly less clubby and more meritocratic, there's more women, and there's certainly a greater variety of restaurants and bars. On the other hand, people are more stressed. I suspect the arrival of the big US investment banks has been the source of the biggest cultural shifts.

**PJ** The areas around Spitalfields and Brick Lane have developed and added new life.

#### How will it change in future?

**GS** More people will move in. There will be more restaurants and better shopping. There will be a softening of the borders between the City and the trendy areas, and a more relaxed feel will develop.

**HH** Hopefully not much.

**JD** Residents will be taken into account more. There are around 6,000 people living in the City and that number is increasing. There has been more residential development over the last five years, such as the big, old bank buildings which are being converted into apartments.

**JM** There will be a lot more high-quality, modern architecture. We don't have much of it in London and it's important.

**NP** One significant change will be working patterns. The big banks now pay their senior staff so much—and expect so much in return—that people will want to retire earlier.

**PJ** More people will come and live in the City, and more bars and restaurants will open. At the moment everything is owned by a chain.

#### Where are you usually at 1.15pm?

**GS** I have been seen in the restaurants around Smithfield, or in Searcy's restaurant at the Barbican, but quite often I am at my desk with a sandwich from Birley's.

**HH** Eating somewhere.

**JS** In the shop, serving or getting orders ready. I start at 4am, go to Smithfield to buy the meat and get here at 6am, so my day is nearly over at 1.15pm.

**JD** I could be on my roof; in a deli bar in Smithfield; or I could be buying fish from my fish man in Farringdon Road or I could be at one of the churches nearby listening to a recital.

**JM** Chances are I'd be having a working lunch.

**MW** In a meeting, sometimes in a restaurant.

**NP** At a business lunch.

**PJ** I have just arrived at work and I'm touching base with the staff and checking my telephone messages and emails. I don't go to bed until 4.30am, so my day is just starting at lunchtime.

#### Which is your favourite street in the City?

**GS** I'm hopeless at geography but any of those old Dickensian ones which pepper the city are lovely.

**HH** Bow Lane at Christmas time.

**JS** Gresham Street is nice if you're walking—the Guildhall is a fine building. I look at it every time and say, "it's still here then".

**JD** Cloth Fair. It's a quaint little one-way street which leads down the side of St Bartholomew's into West Smithfield. There is a churchyard on one side, a nice pub and lots of alleys leading off it. It hasn't really changed in the last 100 years.

**JM** Bow Lane. It's lively, has lots of interesting little shops and a real sense of community.

**NP** Not quite a street, but I like the area around Smithfield market. Lots of space and some lively restaurants.

**PJ** Tabernacle Street which goes from Finsbury Square round to Hoxton. It's just a cheeky little street and not a lot of people know about it.

INTERVIEWS BY SALLY ROBINSON



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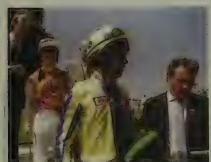


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Nick Cheyne, above right and top right, is responsible for overseeing the course at Ascot, above, ensuring that the stables are immaculate, and the turf in perfect condition.

## The ringmaster

Since 1994, Nick Cheyne has been responsible for making sure that the 300 acres of Ascot racecourse is in the best possible condition for the Royal Meeting. He lives in a flat overlooking the course itself and, at the crack of dawn every morning, he is either on the phone to the London Weather Centre or out on the course making sure all is well.

The four days of the Royal Meeting are the most terrifying of the year. I get so hyped up. The first year I lost my voice completely through nerves. I suppose planning for the next meeting begins almost as soon as the last one is over but things really hot up six or seven weeks before. We have one day's racing on the same ground in early May which acts as a dress rehearsal. In the winter, for the jumping meetings, we use a different paddock and course. This year we are researching ways to make the turf even better for the future as the whole course is due for a major rebuilding programme in 2002. Meanwhile, I need to make sure everything is perfect for this year, not just on the course but the whole estate, the paddock, the awns, the car parks. The trees may need pruning. I get

someone who is 6ft 6in to walk under the trees in the paddock with a top hat on to make sure there is ample clearance. This has to be done not more than two weeks before the meeting, in case the trees grow back. I have to make sure that the stables and lads' hostels are immaculate. We expect 100 runners a day and have 150 stables to keep pristine. Overseas trainers may bring their horses here several days in advance. Otherwise, it is grass management, fertilising, drainage and, most crucially, watering. I have to describe the official going in advance for the trainers and the racing press and decide whether or not to water during the meeting. Ideally, I like natural ground, with no watering, and want it to rain in early June—Ascot is free draining and the course can take plenty of rain. The weather is my biggest concern as it has such an effect on the comfort and enjoyment of racers. Once the Royal Meeting is underway I am up at 5.30am and on the go all day. The buzz keeps me going, but it is nice to dress down and relax for Ascot Heath on the Saturday, when it is no longer Royal Ascot with all that that implies."



Antoniette Eugster, above, snaps the movers and shakers at the Season's events, such as Royal Ascot, above right. She also photographs other star-studded events—the picture of Ralph Fiennes and Francesca Annis, above far right, was taken at the premiere of *The English Patient*.

[the Season]

# Staging the Season

With that very British phenomenon, the Season, in full swing once again, Celestria Noel looks behind the picnic hampers and outsized hats to the people who make it all happen.



## Photo call

Antoniette Eugster is a coolly elegant blonde who lives in Battersea with long-haired, miniature dachshund Roger and black Labrador Harry. She has been photographing events of the Season for 10 years both as a contributor to the social pages of magazines and when commissioned privately by party givers.

"My first-ever event was a second birthday party at Claridges organised by Lady Elizabeth Anson of Party Planners. My first for Jennifer's Diary in *Harpers & Queen* was the Macmillan Cancer Relief Christmas Fair in 1992. Over the years, I have obviously come to know a great many faces on the scene. Even so, when working for a magazine, you need to check and write down all the names for the captions, so you need to build up a rapport. At my first Berkeley Dress Show there was a general photo call in the park and I warned one young girl that the paparazzi were waiting to see her limsy dress fly skywards in the spring breeze. She (and her mother) were eternally grateful and I went on to photograph her 18th birthday party and, this summer, will do her wedding. I do not do as many weddings as I once did, as I am so

busy during the week and I also do portraiture at the weekends. A truly exhausting season weekend would be a wedding in the country on a Saturday afternoon, a dance in London that evening and then polo on Sunday—a killer if it rains. I love Ascot, even though it is hard to get something different from all the other photographers, as you are only allowed to work in certain restricted positions. At any event with a lot of paparazzi I look for a different shot, even if it needs a lot of patience. At the gala premiere of *The English Patient* I got a wonderful picture of Ralph Fiennes and Francesca Annis descending a staircase, by asking politely after all the other photographers had gone. People know that they can trust me. I am not in the business of catching them out."

"AT ANY EVENT WITH A LOT OF PAPARAZZI I LOOK FOR A DIFFERENT SHOT, EVEN IF IT NEEDS A LOT OF PATIENCE."



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**NBI**

Fireworks, right, and yacht  
racing, below, are highlights  
of Skandia Life Cowes  
Week, where the nightly  
disco run by William  
Bartholemew (pictured  
with his wife, Carolyn)  
attracts the crowds.



## Disco king

William Bartholemew, 44, started his own business in 1989 after  
leaving Juliana's Discotheque, where he had been since 1974. His  
company organises luxurious parties for international clients, but  
he still loves the Season and is to be found at such annual events as  
Tommy's Campaign Ball and the White Knight. Every summer he  
goes to Skandia Life Cowes Week with his wife Carolyn and their  
children, where his nightly disco has become part of the scene.

"I first went to Cowes in 1977, for one of the yacht club balls, and  
have gone ever since. In fact, for the last 10 years I have done the disco  
for the Royal Yacht Squadron ball, but our main event is our own  
nightclub which we run for 10 days. It was in an old theatre in the High  
Street for 12 years. We made it far too formal at first. Now we are down  
at the marina in a huge boat shed and we have no dress code. We  
open at 10.30pm and get up to 700 people a night. They come from all  
over the world. Of course, crews are totally international, but racing  
today is so professional that the serious contenders are often not  
allowed out at night to party. However, plenty of others do like to  
dance, drink beer and have fun. They come to us after having dinner  
in town or at one of the yacht clubs. I am always being asked to go sailing  
but, I'm ashamed to admit, I get seasick, so usually make an  
excuse. Everyone misses seeing the Royal Yacht Britannia moored in  
Cowes Roads, but Paul Getty's beautiful yacht *Talitha G* is usually  
around. Some crews do come in and celebrate a win with champagne,  
but it is mainly casual clothes and beer. I get Ed Basset, who is a  
younger man than me, to provide the music but Carolyn and I are  
there every night. I trust my own taste more with my contemporaries  
and can still get them up on the dance floor when I play 'I Will Survive'."



## Dress rehearsal

Many of the women who dress not  
only well, but cleverly, for the events  
of the Season share a common  
secret—Laura Benjamin. Her shop,  
just off Knightsbridge, Laura B Cout-  
ure, is where the smart ones arrive in  
February with a list of dates, already  
knowing their requirements. It's also  
where the less well organised may  
find that special something for next  
Saturday's wedding. Laura knows her  
clients—who include Jo Malone, the Countess of Bradford  
and Sally Burton—and can usually be found in the thick of things at  
many of the summer's events. She is married to Carlo de Chair,  
with whom she is pictured above, and lives in Chelsea.

"The business has been going for 12 years but we have only been  
in this shop for 18 months. Clients come to me from all over the world,  
by appointment. I do a lot for Ascot, especially for the wives of owners  
and trainers, but others might come in needing something to wear to  
the Chelsea Flower Show or a private party. We sit down and go  
through the new shapes, fabrics and colours. For a big, summer wed-  
ding, clients come in months ahead. I check on who is going to which  
event so no one clashes. I can help out at the last minute but it is best  
to come early. For a long day at a formal event, cool wool and wool  
crepe are the best fabrics. You should never have to worry about your  
clothes: they should stay smart all day. I'm so glad tailoring is back.

"This season's colours are fuchsia with navy, coral and turquoise,  
or a cooler palette with ice blues and, of course, black and white. Per-  
sonally, I love colour. I do accessories and shoes and provide match-  
ing fabric for hats, but send my clients to have them made by experts  
such as Freddie Fox or John Boyd. My regulars come because  
they know that I understand their lifestyle and specialise in outfits for  
occasions. My clothes are expensive (just under £1,000 for a made-to-  
measure suit), but they do last—I saw someone at Ascot last year in  
an eight-year-old suit. Perhaps I should start putting in sleeves that  
drop out after two seasons—a bit of built-in obsolescence."



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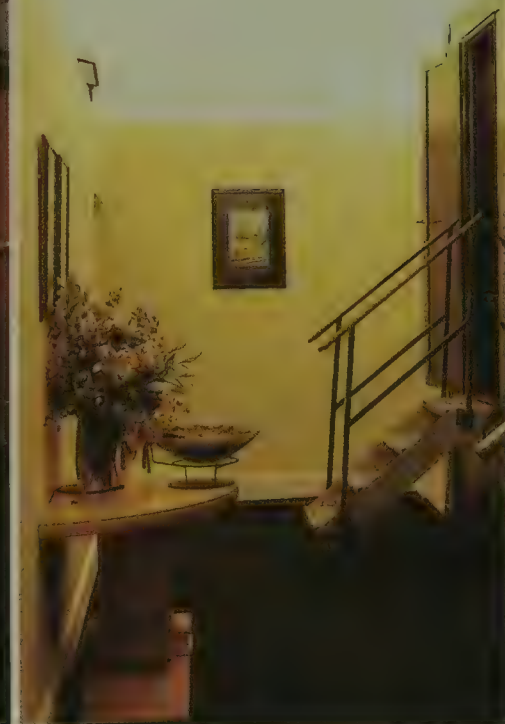
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## At your convenience

Richard Ferrand, 43, started Glenby's Travelling Loos, the first-ever luxuriously appointed facilities on wheels, in 1990. With their British Racing Green exteriors, Zoffany wallpaper, mahogany towel boxes, pot-pourri and mending kits, they filled a need, hitherto unsuspected, but subsequently much copied. He lives in Rutland, while the loos live at Windsor racecourse.

"I began by just finding a guy in Northamptonshire who could make the trailers. Then I designed the whole thing from scratch. I wanted it to look like the loo at Annabel's, but on wheels. The technology was new and untried and our first event was a disaster, but the client was an engineer and, far from being angry, helped us sort out the glitch. At big events our loos are always connected to the smartest marquee and reached by a covered walkway. We do all sorts of events during the Season, from the Ladies' Open Golf to the Prince's Trust Concerts in Hyde Park, and of course, we are there for Asprey at the Royal Windsor Horse Show and Cartier and Veuve Clicquot for the polo. Sponsors love us—we are the perfect finishing touch. We are usually booked by the event organiser rather than directly by the client. There are three ladies' loos and three gentlemen's stand-ups in each trailer. Gents spend less time than ladies but go more often as a rule. We allow three minutes per lady when calculating



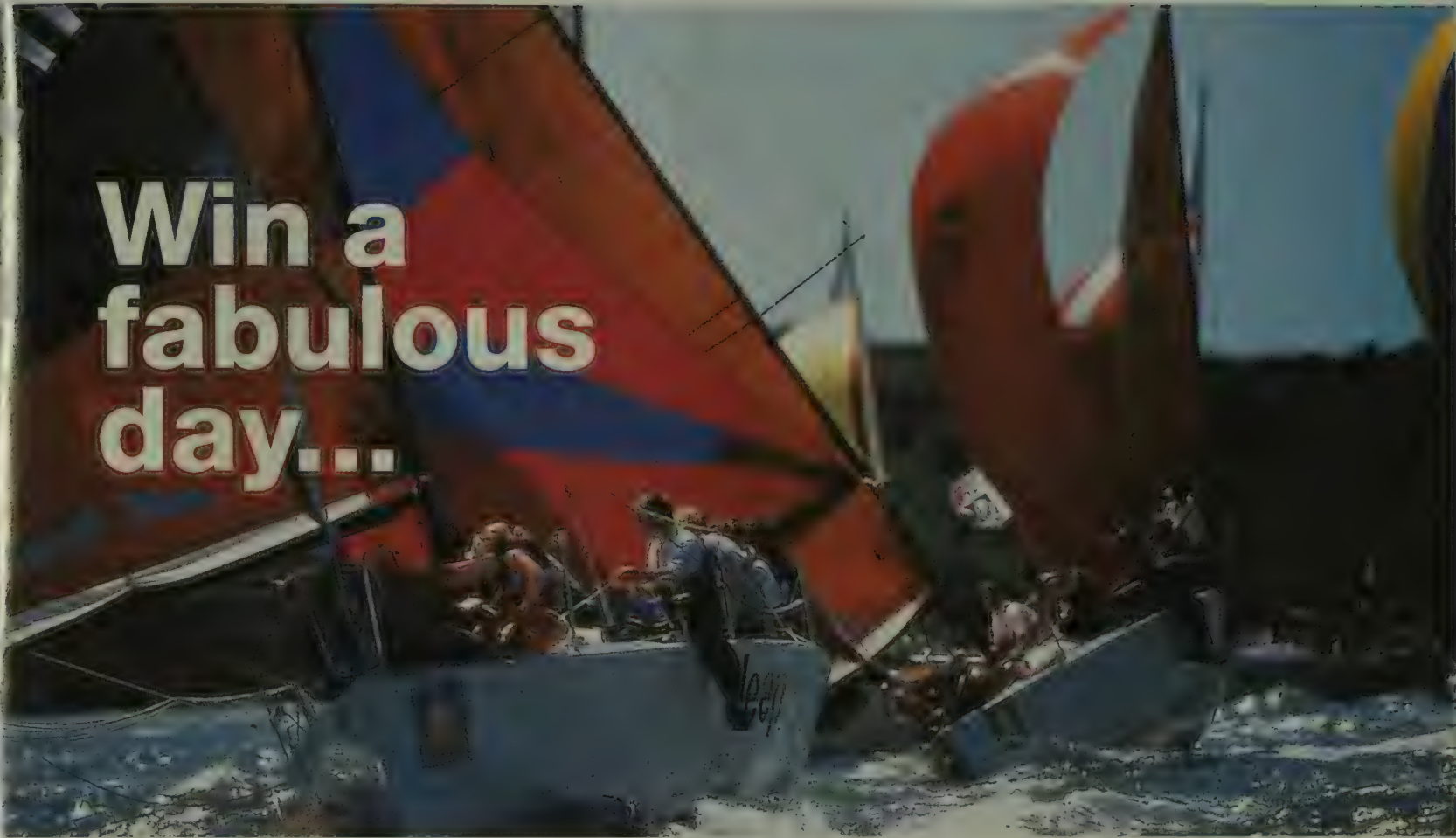
demand, but if the event has a match start at a certain time we need more loos as all the ladies will go at once. They do not mind a bit of a wait as it is the ideal place for a gossip, after all. Drug-taking can be a concern. After an event in Munich, the cleaners simply swept the surfaces on to the fitted carpets and the sniffer dog went mad at customs. We have found people in flagrante over the years but the main thing we find left behind is, rather boringly, sunglasses."

LADY CELESTRIA NOEL is author of the *Debrett's Guide to the Season*.

**Above, Royal Windsor racecourse—home of some of the Season's most exclusive equine entertainment—and Glenby's Travelling Loos, top left and right.**



[competition]



# Win a fabulous day...

...at Skandia Life  
Cowes Week 2001  
plus sailing apparel  
from Henri Lloyd



Skandia Life, sponsors of the world's largest sailing regatta, are offering *ILN* readers the chance to win a spectacular day out at Cowes during Skandia Life Cowes Week 2001. The event, which takes place from August 4-11, is expected to attract in excess of 1,000 boats. The yachts range in size from 18ft day boats to classic yachts over 90ft and the ultimate in hi-tech racing machines.

Sailors come from all over the world to compete in this unique event. There are over 30 classes of yacht and 200 races during the eight-day week. Our top Olympic sailors—Shirley Robertson and Iain Percy, both gold-medal winners—will be participating. Other sporting celebrities will be joining them on and off the water.

Our competition allows one lucky reader to take a partner on a luxury sailing yacht to watch the racing and to have a chance to go ashore to see the historic town of Cowes, with its many yacht clubs and the famous High Street. **The day out will include a champagne lunch for two, first-class rail travel to Southampton, where the yacht will be boarded, plus sailing apparel from official technical clothing suppliers Henri Lloyd.**

Just answer the simple questions below and send your answers to: Skandia Life Cowes Week Competition, The Illustrated London News, 20 Upper Ground, London SE1 9PF. To arrive no later than July 1, 2001. The date of the trip will be either August 7 or August 9, 2001. No alternative prize will be provided.

1. How many boats are expected at this year's Skandia Life Cowes Week?
2. Which Olympic medal winners will be taking part?
3. What is the name of the famous yacht club in Cowes where all the races start and finish?

**Six lucky runners-up will receive a special-edition Skandia Life polo shirt and cap.**

**RULES** 1. Closing date is July 1, 2001. 2. The prize is not transferable, and there is no cash alternative. 3. The Illustrated London News will select the winner at random from correct entries. 4. The Illustrated London News accepts no liability for any losses or injuries suffered in connection with the prizes, or for failure to provide the prizes exactly as stated. 5. Employees of The Illustrated London News, Skandia Life and Henri Lloyd, or their relatives, are not eligible to enter. 6. All entrants must be aged 18 or over. 7. Please state on your entry if you do not wish to receive any direct mail. 8. A list of winners will be available after the closing date. In order to receive this list, please send a SAE to the competition address.



# Lord of London's new skyline

Showered with accolades for his innovative, forward-thinking designs, is Norman Foster the City of London's modern-day Christopher Wren? Jonathan Glancey tracks his rise to fame.



Norman Foster relaxes in his light-filled offices overlooking the Thames. Right, Foster and partners planned new headquarters for the Greater London Authority.

*SI MONUMENTUM requirunt, circumspice:* If you seek his monument, look about you. These famous words are inscribed above the resting place of England's best-known architect, Sir Christopher Wren, inside his masterpiece, St Paul's Cathedral. If you do, indeed, look about you from the top of its mighty dome today you will see a scattering of office blocks and a few truncated skyscrapers peppering the near horizon unconvincingly. But, if you peer more closely, you can still see the jewel-like towers and spires of the City of London churches that Wren rebuilt after the Great Fire of 1666. These magical buildings—architectural sonnets—form a lovely red-brick and Portland-stone necklace around St Paul's.

Before the Blitz and the property booms that resounded across London from the mid-50s, Wren's churches gave the City of London its distinctive and much-loved skyline. Until the late-60s, he remained London's most prominent architect. The next to make anything like so great an impact was Richard Seifert, a favourite among London developers in the 60s and 70s. His most famous building is Centrepont, that tall, thin, concrete beehive

rising 385ft above Oxford Street. Seifert went on to design many Pop-era office blocks in central London, notably those unblinking, black sentinels in front of Euston Station.

Then, in the 80s, when postmodern architecture was all the rage with its goofy cut-out and paste-on Classical details—a split pediment here, an over-exaggerated cornice there—it looked, for a short while, as if Terry Farrell was the new Seifert. His monument to the Thatcher years, Alban Gate, is a massive, pink office block straddling the dual carriageways of London Wall. It's as if a padded-shouldered, 80s power suit had decided to become a building. His other overblown, cartoon-style designs include the M16 headquarters on the Thames at Vauxhall and the over-scaled arch that carries office floors above the platforms of Charing Cross station.

Yet, if Farrell was the new Seifert, who is the new Wren? The answer is Britain's most famous contemporary architect, and possibly the world's best-known architect today—Norman Foster. Knighted and ennobled, Foster heads a formidable team, some 500 strong,



## [architecture]

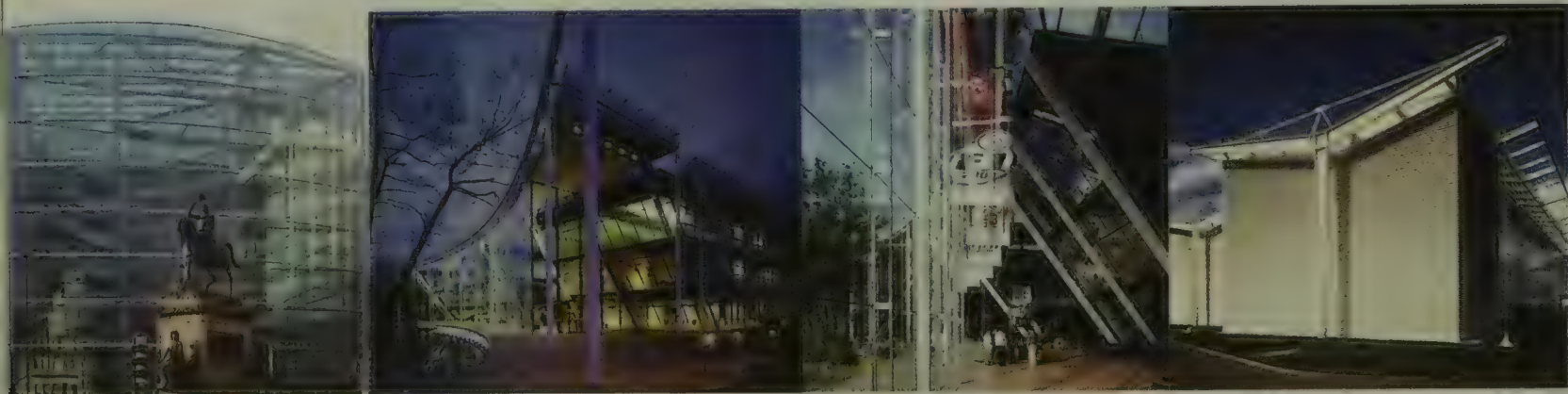
from his big and airy offices overlooking the Thames between Albert and Battersea bridges. Foster's work is as instantly recognisable as Wren's. His palette of cool whites, greys and silver is offset by acres of glass, held together by much the same sure-footed grasp of science, technology and materials that Wren possessed in his day.

Sailing east to west along the Thames, Foster's contributions include the North Greenwich Transport Interchange; the cavernous Jubilee Line tube station at Canary Wharf (a tourist attraction in its own right); Citibank Headquarters, one of the two, new 700ft commercial towers acting as a pair of architectural guards outside Canary Wharf Tower, Britain's tallest building; and the proposed Swiss Re building, an insurance headquarters to be built on the site of the City of London's old Baltic Exchange, which was destroyed by an IRA bomb in 1992. Bizarrely, this new, round-topped, environmentally sound office building is commonly referred to in the press as Foster's "erotic gherkin". It is gherkin-shaped,

The bridge is one of the few low points in Foster's career, which is remarkable given the sheer volume of intelligent buildings that flow from his architects' computers. There was the unseemly row over the use of the wrong stone in the building of the south portico in the British Museum's Great Court, and a hold-up concerning the original cladding used on the Sainsbury Centre in Norwich, but little else. The problems that arose with the bridge and the Sainsbury Centre were due to the use of new techniques, while the stone affair was nothing to do with the architects and, in the great scheme of aesthetics, barely matters.

Continuing our tour through London, take a deep breath and plunge on to the new office building at the foot of High Holborn—former site of the Daily Mirror's "Red Lubianka"—where infamous, one-time proprietor Robert Maxwell used to land his helicopter. Then nip back into the City to see another new office, Moorhouse, that Foster designed off London Wall, a pediment or two's length from Farrell's Alban Gate, before returning

**Foster's work is characterised by his use of white, grey and silver, offset by acres of glass—from far left to right, offices at Holborn Place; two views of the Electronic Arts headquarters in Chertsey, Surrey; chic offices at Stockley Business Park; and the energy-efficient design for the new GLA headquarters.**



FOSTER IS RESTLESS, FOREVER CURIOUS AND QUESTIONING, ALWAYS TRYING TO BETTER HIMSELF, HIS ARCHITECTS AND HIS BUILDINGS.

true, but when was a pickled vegetable ever erotic?

Across the river, on the Southwark bank of the Thames between Tower and London bridges, Foster designed the GLA Headquarters, a kind of steel-and-glass helmet rising from the river's edge. And, in Bloomsbury, the Great Court of the reconfigured and restored British Museum—Europe's biggest covered square—acts as a meeting place for the museum's 6 million annual visitors and a junction box that has helped sort out the great electric charge of people passing through this august institution.

Back on the river, there's the Millennium Bridge—dubbed the "wobbly bridge"—linking the Tate Modern art gallery, housed in the former Bankside Power Station, with St Paul's Cathedral. A joint design between Foster and Partners, the engineers Arup, and the sculptor Sir Anthony Caro, the bridge shook so dramatically when the first crowds flowed over it in June of last summer that it has been closed until further notice—also causing Foster's own reputation to wobble. But, once the modifications have been made, this graceful pedestrian crossing will doubtless be restored to favour.

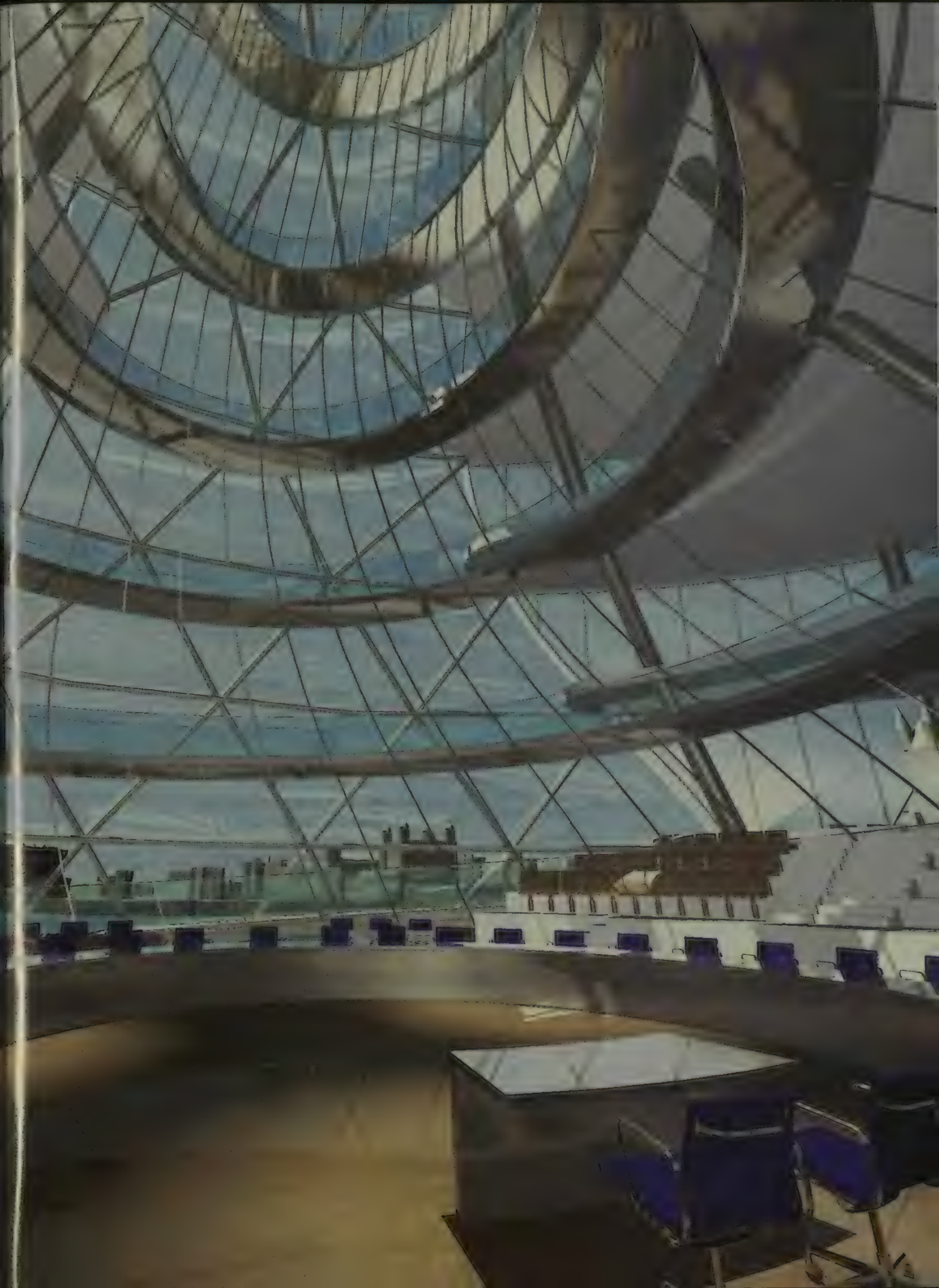
west to the subtle Sackler Galleries that Foster rebuilt in the heart of the Royal Academy of Arts on Piccadilly.

From here, it just keeps going. A new HQ for Parisian company JCDecaux; the IBM Technical Park at Greenford; chic office buildings at Stockley Business Park near Heathrow; and then, further afield, that modern gateway to London, Stansted Airport, with its graceful, parasol-like roof. In short, Foster has made London his stamping ground as Wren did 300 years previously.

Neither man was a born Londoner. Wren, a clergyman's son, hailed from rural Wiltshire, while Foster, a factory worker's son, was born and brought up in a suburb of industrial Manchester. Both have been fascinated by new technology and pushed buildings to new limits. Both Wren and Foster buildings tend to be cool, calm and collected. Wren was a notoriously hard worker; so is Foster. Wren (1632-1723) lived long enough to be hauled up in a basket to the very top of St Paul's (completed in 1710). Foster (born 1935) often inspects his buildings by helicopter or private jet.

Foster's rise to the pinnacle of his chosen profession has been a remarkable one. Most British architects







## [architecture]

come from comfortable, middle-class, professional backgrounds. Cool as fridges for the most part and bursting with apparent self-confidence, few appear to be fired by passion or the need to prove themselves. Not so Norman Foster. A driven man who pilots his own planes—gliders, stunt specials, helicopter, executive jets—Foster is restless, forever curious and questioning, always trying to better himself, his architects, his clients and his buildings.

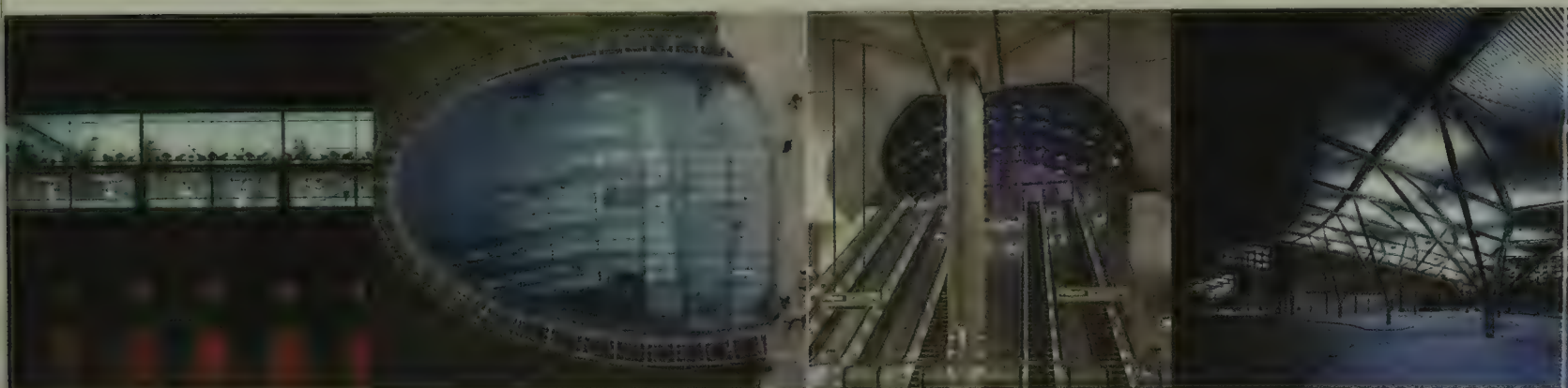
As a boy he was typical of his generation in one way—he loved racing bicycles, steam locomotives, aircraft spotting, making models and sketching. After national service with the RAF, where he specialised in electronic engineering, Foster worked as a clerk in the accounts department in Manchester City Hall before taking a job as an administrative assistant in a local architect's office. He drew buildings—old and new—in his spare time, and his talent was finally recognised. He was offered a place to study at Manchester University School of Architecture, and from that moment onwards,

buildings make you want to believe in progress and the future in the way that the sci-fi interiors of Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* did more than 30 years ago. They are charged with optimism.

Foster and Rogers eventually went their own ways. In the 70s, and again in the 80s, both built masterpieces that ensured them places in the history books. In the 70s, Rogers designed the Pompidou Centre (with Genoese architect Renzo Piano and Irish engineer Peter Rice) and Foster the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts at the University of East Anglia, on the periphery of Norwich—an exquisite art gallery and teaching centre with its structure and aesthetic firmly rooted in aircraft design.

In the 80s, Rogers came up trumps with his heroic design for the Lloyd's Building in the City of London (dismissed as an "oil refinery" in 1986, but much respected today), and Foster with the beautifully realised Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank in Hong Kong. This stunning headquarters was custom-made down to the last detail,

**Natural light floods in through the glazed façade at the IBM Technical Park, below far left, and the glass roofs of the cavernous Canary Wharf station, below centre left and right, and Stansted airport, below. Foster's proposed design for the Swiss Re London headquarters building is often referred to as the "erotic gherkin", right.**



Foster soared into the architectural stratosphere.

A post-graduate scholarship to Yale University saw him befriending Richard Rogers (now Lord Rogers of Riverside; Foster is Lord Foster of Thames Bank—they remain friends, and friendly rivals). Together they toured the best new US architecture, design and engineering. Both were particularly influenced by the lightweight, steel-framed designs of Californian architects, among them Craig Ellwood, Ezra Ehrenkrantz and Pierre Koenig.

At a time when most British architects were bogged down in the thick, concrete tweeds and heavy, brick brogues, Foster and Rogers winged back to England in the early 60s on gossamer wings. Their radical new style, also very much influenced by the US engineer and inventor R Buckminster Fuller, was truly a breath of fresh air. With Foster and Rogers' Team Four, set up with Foster's wife Wendy Cheesman and Georgie Wolton, British architecture lost weight and gained a fresh style—nicknamed "High Tech"—that has travelled extremely well around the world.

Foster admits that his quest for a perfect architecture may be based, in part, on an illusion: "The illusion," he says, "of order in a disordered world, of privacy in the midst of many, of space on a crowded site, of light on a dull day." Yet, at his best, he is a conjurer. Foster

and aircraft standards were used in its design. When Foster was asked to present his favourite building for BBC TV's *Building Sights* series in 1991, he characteristically chose a Boeing 747 Jumbo jet.

Ever since, Foster has been inundated with work—not just for buildings but for bridges, furniture, vehicles and exhibitions, too. Married for the third time (his first wife, Wendy, died in 1989) and with adopted children among his own, Foster—fit and very much a ball of energy—continues to pilot himself to higher and higher goals. It is easy to imagine him feeling frustrated that he will never get to build on the moon or Mars.

He has won pretty much every award and honour going, including a prestigious Order of Merit. He tends to frighten those without his sheer tenacity, yet Foster is no machine—he just doesn't know how to flannel or waste time. "I like to take my pleasures seriously," he says. And as for Foster's monument, you hardly need to seek it—it is pretty much impossible to escape.

**JONATHAN GLANCEY** is Architecture and Design correspondent for *The Guardian*. A writer and broadcaster, his latest book is *The Story of Architecture* (Dorling Kindersley); the next is an essay on the future of London, which will be published by Verso this autumn. Like Norman Foster, he is a keen pilot.

□ An exhibition at the British Museum, *Exploring the City: The Norman Foster Studio*, brings architecture to life through models, specially commissioned films and full-size prototypes, including designs for the world's tallest skyscraper. June 20-October 7.









# SPA KINGDOM

Thailand's perfect combination of abundant natural beauty and gentle people makes it the ideal location to experience the luxury of a health spa where both mind and body can be refreshed.

BEGIN WITH A DIP in steaming waters enhanced with blended natural Thai herbs. Add 10 drops of lavender oil for relaxation. Accompany with a pot of Thai herbal iced tea. No, this is not an exotic Oriental recipe but an à la carte choice from the Bath Menu of the Westin Banyan Tree Spa, Asia's tallest health resort. In a garden-setting of trees and scarlet heliconia flowers, 53 storeys up above Bangkok, guests sink into tubs strewn with orchid petals, gaze out over the city lights and indulge in a long, sybaratic soak that is merely an hors d'oeuvre for the pampering treatments yet to come.

The Westin Banyan Tree is just one of a collection of fabulously luxurious spas that has turned Thailand into a—if not *the*—world leader in exotic, five-star health retreats. This gentle country has all the natural ingredients: a balmy climate, unspoilt beaches, lush vegetation and exquisite open-air pavilion architecture that enables guests to enjoy a massage on a teak deck overlooking the sea. But, perhaps, most importantly, Thailand has a long history of sophisticated health treatments. Its people have always visited Buddhist temples for traditional massage, and have used local herbs as part of ayurvedic medicine. Their approach, of achieving fitness and total relaxation through the exercise of both mind and body, is one that strikes a chord with today's travellers. However, the top Thai spas are completely international and offer the best Western treatments alongside home-grown techniques.

Service is a key factor in the success of Thailand's spas, so it is perhaps unsurprising that the country's trailblazer should open at the Oriental Hotel, well-known for staff who anticipate guests' needs before they are even aware of them themselves. In this spa's opulent, carved teak suites, amid trees fringing the Chao Phraya River, a masseuse will gently knead your shoulders while a colleague noiselessly pads in and out, bringing a fragrant papaya wrap with which to





"paint" your body, fresh fruits to nibble, and celadon cups brimming with lemongrass tea.

Light, but flavour-packed, Thai cuisine is also a major ingredient in making Chiva-Som, near southern Thailand's royal holiday hideaway of Hua Hin, one of the country's flagship spas. While the Westin Banyan Tree and Oriental are the perfect pick-me-up for visitors passing through Bangkok, Chiva-Som is a seaside resort where guests check in for several days or even weeks and, after a medical health check, follow a tailor-made régime designed to achieve tangible results. Guests as varied as Liz Hurley and the President of Nicaragua discover an equally wide-ranging choice of treatments from scrubs and body polishes, hydrotherapy and acupuncture to a choice of massages: Thai, Swedish, Hawaiian *lomi-lomi* or Balinese. But perhaps one of the most memorable activities is the simplest—yoga on the beach in the setting sun.

The Banyan Tree Phuket is another great spa—named in 1998 by *Condé Nast Traveler* as the world's best—in a beachside setting, with private pavilions where guests can enjoy a massage alfresco. Again, the architecture is superb—spacious, wooden suites with sliding doors open on to sunken pools and jacuzzis with gardens or the sea beyond. When not having a spa treatment, guests can take part in watersports, play golf or just stretch out in the richly furnished sala.

In Thailand's northern hills, just outside Chiang Mai, the Lanna Spa at the Regent Resort is set among terraced rice fields worked by water buffalo. But the spa's hi-tech treatment rooms, in individual cottages that peep out among the trees, could not be more unexpected in this rural setting overlooked by forested mountains. Like all of Thailand's spas it combines natural beauty with world-class facilities to ensure that every guest returns home both spiritually and physically refreshed.

Travel to Thailand's luxurious spas with Thai Airways International, which has long been known for its high standards of service, comfort and reliability—international passenger surveys rate it one of the world's foremost airlines. Thai Airways operates 10 non-stop flights a week from London to Bangkok, with regular onward flights to 22 destinations within Thailand.

Royal Orchid Plus, Thai Airways' frequent-flyer programme, offers an unprecedented combination of travel privileges, and passengers are able to redeem miles on any of the 15 carriers in the prestigious Star Alliance. For further information, contact your travel agent, or Thai Airways' London reservations office on 0870 606 0911. Please contact Tourism Authority of Thailand on +44 870 900 2007 or visit our website at <[www.tourismthailand.org](http://www.tourismthailand.org)>. □

Clockwise from below left, gaze out over Bangkok from Asia's tallest health resort, the Westin Banyan Tree Spa; the Oriental Spa in Bangkok where staff anticipate guests' needs; Thai massage to stretch the body at Chiva-Som, the beautiful beachside resort where guests can enjoy alfresco meditation in a Thai sala. Top right, a romantic meal for two beside a Pool Villa at the Banyan Tree, Phuket. Right, comfort, courteous and attentive service and excellent dining on board Thai Airways' flights.



[florists]



## floralfashion

Brigid Keenan meets London's hottest florists—the new couturiers of the flower world.

**ONE YEAR** my annual village horticultural show had a special category in the flower-arrangement section: "Wedding Bouquet". I spent a happy morning preparing my entry—a huge, traditionally arranged vase of garden flowers—secretly thinking that I would win. But no, there was a notice from the judges pinned on my flowers saying "very interesting, but too heavy". The arrangement that did win was not traditional at all. It involved lots of white tulle and I had dismissed it from the outset. Brought up in the old-school tradition, there were certain rules relating to flower arrangement that I always stuck to, and one such rule was not to indulge in gimmicks such as mixing fabric and flowers.

I should have paid attention—it was only a taste of what was to come. In the years since, there has been a revolution in the art of flower arranging. For a start, it is now a profession with a name: "doing the flowers" has become floristry or flower design. A bunch of flowers is now called a hand tie; a vase has become a container, which might hold anything from silver pebbles, chunks of crystal and layers of multi-coloured sand to coffee beans or even goldfish; and arrangements themselves might include bamboo, topiary or bare branches covered with a mosaic of shards of mirror. The leading flower designers of today are celebrities and, nowadays, even the lilies of the field are expected to have logos.

"You can't use just any old florist if you're sending a bunch of flowers to the editor of *Vogue*—it's important who has designed them, because that relates to who and what you are," says Nikki Tibbles, one of London's most successful flower designers.

Above left, Nikki Tibbles from *Wild at Heart*, the Chanel of the florist world. Right, a sculptural creation of arum lilies and snakegrass, from McQueens.



THE LEADING  
FLOWER  
DESIGNERS OF  
TODAY ARE  
CELEBRITIES AND  
EVEN THE LILIES  
OF THE FIELD ARE  
EXPECTED TO  
HAVE LOGOS.



"Labels are very important now," agrees Kally Ellis of McQueens. "It's not 'Oh, those flowers are beautiful! It's 'where did you get them?'"

Flower arranging has become so studied, so sculptural and so abstract that a recent edition of the style guru's house magazine, *Wallpaper*, called for a return to the good old days of Constance Spry—natural flower arranging in much the same way as I had prepared my bouquet for the village show.

The revolution in the world of flowers has been social as well as floral. Flowers used to be a class thing. Flower-arrangement courses were what young ladies did in-between leaving school and getting married; their mothers "did the flowers" in the house and volunteered for the church flower rota; and London society's favourite florist was Lady Pulbrook, of Pulbrook and Gould. John Carter, another of today's leading flower designers, says: "When I started out, professional flower arranging revolved very much around society people. If you came from an ordinary family, as I did, it was difficult to get on." Fortunately, John did get on by working with Joan Palmer, a well-known London florist, for nine years.

In 2001, flowers are more about time and money than class. Busy women don't have time to do their own arrangements any more and are instead prepared to spend large sums of money on getting someone else to do it for them. Much of John Carter's business is arranging the flowers in peoples' homes: "We go to each client once or twice a week and then, of course, you do their parties, their children's weddings, and so on." His list of clients includes the interior designers Kelly Hoppen, Alidad, Nina Campbell and Sir Terence Conran, "the designer's designer". Louise Davis of Wild Things agrees: "Flowers have become like convenience food. People are prepared to pay more to have them delivered all ready to put in place. Nearly all our work these days is done in containers so that the client needn't have to do a single thing, not even put the bouquet in a vase. They prefer it that way."

The very cheapest bouquet from London's top flower designers averages £35, plus a delivery charge of up to £10. Kally Ellis of McQueens says that she is constantly amazed by how much disposable income people seem to have: "Last Valentine's Day we had a client who spent £1,130 on flowers for his wife. It just seems, to me, a ridiculous waste of money." At Wild Things, Louise Davis had a customer who walked into the shop one day and ordered 1,000 roses to be delivered—stylishly arranged—to a lady friend. She won't reveal the cost, but she does say that the gesture was greatly appreciated by the recipient, who asked Wild Things to dry all the roses for her afterwards.

Flower designers these days probably spend less time learning how to arrange flowers—some of the most successful have never learned at all—and more keeping up to date with the latest trends in interiors and fashion. Clare Garabedian and Robert Hornsby of In Water go to Paris every year for the *Maison et Objet* trade fair. "It's the most sophisticated of its kind in the world, and it gives us so much to think about. It's important for anyone involved in flower design to know the trends in interior decoration and what colours are coming into fashion," explains Clare. For inspiration, Kally Ellis and Ercole Moroni go to Holland—the source of all their flowers—three times a year on a big buying spree to stock up on the latest containers and to replenish ideas.

John Carter describes the top flower designers as the "couturiers of the flower world". Kally Ellis agrees with him: "What we do is definitely made to measure and not off the peg. It is our business to find out what our clients like so that the flowers we design suit them. We have a very personal relationship with our customers." Having once been a fashion editor, this idea intrigued me, so I picked six of today's leading flower designers and matched them with a famous couturier.

FLOWERS HAVE BECOME LIKE  
CONVENIENCE FOOD. PEOPLE WILL  
PAY MORE TO HAVE THEM DELIVERED  
ALL READY TO PUT IN PLACE.



## Wild at Heart

**Nikki Tibbles at Wild at Heart would be my choice for the florist equivalent of Chanel. Indeed, Chanel is one of her clients, together with other fashion houses such as Burberry and Ralph Lauren. She is also florist for fashionable Schrager hotels, the Sanderson and St Martin's Lane. Nikki Tibbles' simple, yet chic, style—she likes to use lots of the same flower, for instance tight knots of black iris or huge vases of lilac in subtly different tones—has been incredibly successful.**

**In just seven years she has opened three shops and now employs 30 people. She came into the business via a most unlikely route, advertising, an industry in which she had worked for years until one, unsuspecting day she offered to help some friends with their wedding flowers. "And that was it! I gave back the company car and credit card and went to work in a flower shop in Battersea for £1.50 an hour. It's the best thing I ever did," says Nikki. "I am so lucky to have found something to do that I love so much."**

**Her first flower shop was luck, too.**

**Architect Piers Gough was building the famous public toilet in Notting Hill when Nikki put in an application for the shop there—together with 70 others. Fortunately, she got it, and business just took off. Nikki got married last year—who did the flowers, I wondered? "We got married in France to escape all the fuss. My bouquet was a single magnolia flower from a tree in the garden."**

**Wild at Heart, 49a Ledbury Road, W11.**

**Tel: 020 7727 3095.**

**Wild at Heart, Turquoise Island, 222**

**Westbourne Grove, W11. Tel: 020 7727 3095.**

**Wild at Heart, The Great Eastern Hotel,**

**Liverpool Street, EC2. Tel: 020 7618 5350.**



A photograph of five identical black cylindrical vases arranged in a row on a light-colored surface. Each vase contains a single yellow-green stem that arches over the top and then curves back down into the vase. A small, dark red flower is visible at the base of each stem where it enters the vase. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

## In Water

In Water is a partnership between Clare Garabedian, ex-Liberty merchandise director, and Robert Hornsby, florist. The duo became famous overnight with an arrangement they prepared for the restaurant Le Caprice—part of the Signature group, which is also a client. The vase that caused the stir was big, tall, made of glass and filled, like an aquarium, with anthuriums and goldfish. In Water's arrangements are sculptural and architectural, so its corresponding

couturier would have to be one of the Japanese minimalists, such as Issey Miyake. While I was in the shop, stunning black containers with tall, shiny, black-lacquered bamboo and acid-green chrysanthemums were being carried out to the delivery van. It was no surprise, then, to learn that In Water is the florist for Tate Modern.

*In Water, 85 Bell Street, NW1. Tel: 020 7724 9985.*





## Stephen Woodhams

Stephen Woodhams could be the Yves Saint Laurent of flowers. Disciplined, architectural and very, very chic, Stephen's shop blends in well at One Aldwych, the state-of-the-art hotel of the same address that opened in July 1998. Woodhams is different from other florists because he is a gold medal-winning landscape designer as well. Grandson of a Kent nurseryman, from whom he obviously inherited the gardening gene, he sold bedding plants to his teachers at school to make enough money to build his own greenhouse.

Used to designing gardens, organising flowers for huge spaces clearly doesn't faze him. Clients include the Royal Opera House (he did the flowers for its reopening last year), but there is plenty in his tiny, chic shop for the less-grandiose client, including bouquets of fresh flowers arranged for delivery in smart, black boxes and freeze-dried roses in wooden bases.

*Stephen Woodhams, One Aldwych, WC2. Tel: 020 7300 0777.*







## McQueens

McQueens is a partnership between Kally Ellis and Ercole Moroni. The first question people always ask is whether it has anything to do with the famous fashion designer of the same name, and the answer is, sort of. McQueens was the name of the flower shop in Shoreditch that Kally and Ercole took over when they started their business. The shop had, coincidentally, been opened years before by a relative of Alexander McQueen.

The reason Kally Ellis became a florist is even more extraordinary than Nikki Tibbles' story. "I did a language degree before going to work for a French bank in the City. Four years down the line, I had an extraordinary dream—a vision, you might call it—where I was standing in a flower shop surrounded by tulips and ready-made bunches of flowers that I had created," she explains. "When I woke up the next morning, I knew I had to be a florist. I offered my services free to anyone who would take me and worked evenings and weekends, even driving a delivery van," says Kally. "I met Ercole when we were both working for the same florist. I told him what I planned to do and he decided to join me so, after giving

up our jobs, Ercole and I took over the shop in Shoreditch in 1991. Everything was against us—they even painted a Red Route in front of the shop—but the business took off."

McQueens likes to think of itself as the Gucci or Hermès of florists and, indeed, those firms are clients. The company's most prestigious engagement every year is *Vanity Fair's* Oscar awards party in Los Angeles. "They fly us over for 10 days during which we landscape the venue, set out the furniture and arrange the table settings—everything," says Kally. "We even get interviewed by CNN as 'party organisers', which is bizarre. We have a hotline to Holland and fly all the flowers over from there daily. It's quite a feat."

*McQueens has a flower-arranging school with courses lasting from one day to four weeks.*

*McQueens, The Shop, 126 St John Street, EC1. Tel: 020 7251 5505.*

*McQueens, The School, 130 Lauriston Road, E9. Tel: 020 8510 0123*





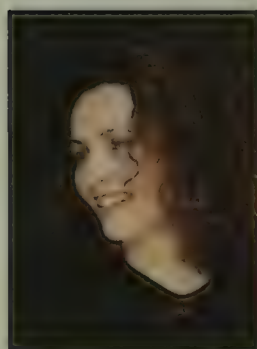
## John Carter

John Carter is definitely the Christian Dior of the flower world, right down to his white-linen logo ribbon with his name printed on it in grey. John Carter stands for luxury—lots and lots of exquisite blooms in delicious, pale colours tied with fat, satin ribbon bows, which are sometimes handmade by his special dressmaker. While running The Flower Van outside Bibendum restaurant in Fulham for 10 years he built up a long list of clients, most of whom stayed with him when he moved to his own studio in Fulham in 1999.

A born perfectionist, discipline and consistency are John's watchwords—he was grounded in them by his grandmother, who was in service, and by his mother, who was so particular that she ironed the dusters. "You can be the most talented person on earth, but you are only as good as your last job," he says. He does not go in for gimmicks: "I am a florist in the old-fashioned sense of the word. My first love is flowers, especially roses."

*John Carter Flowers, Studio C3, The Depot, 2 Michael Road, SW6. Tel: 020 7731 5146.*

FLOWER DESIGNERS PROBABLY SPEND LESS TIME LEARNING HOW TO ARRANGE FLOWERS AND MORE KEEPING UP TO DATE WITH THE LATEST TRENDS IN FASHION AND INTERIORS.



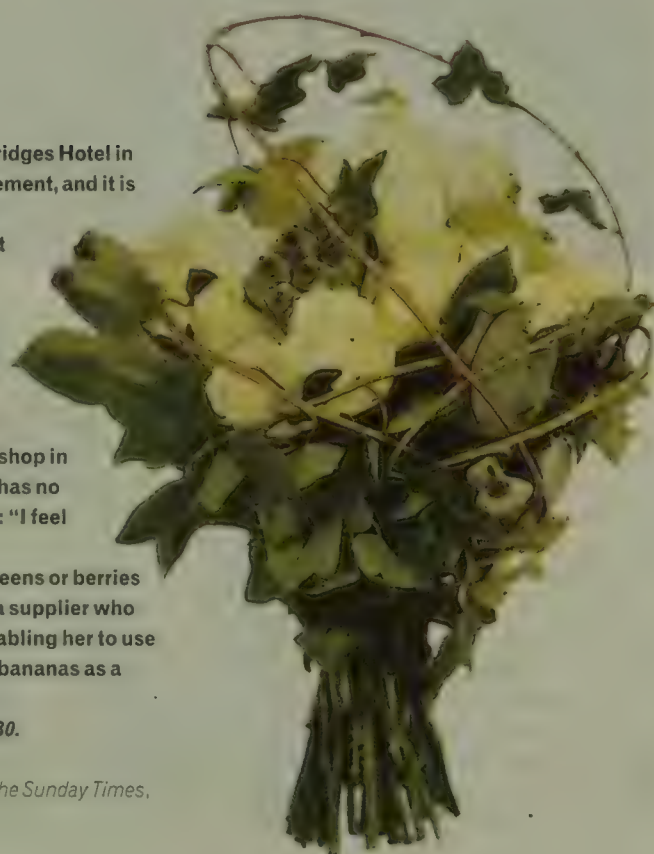
## Wild Things

Wild Things is a cupboard-like shop opposite Claridges Hotel in London. Its pretty bouquets spill out over the pavement, and it is impossible to imagine walking by without being seduced into buying one. Not surprisingly, a great deal of business springs from passing trade. Ungaro might be a comparable couturier, or perhaps Christian Lacroix, because Wild Things' style is young, fun and feminine.

The shop is run by Louise Davis and her partner Niall. The couple moved to London three years ago having left behind a successful flower shop in Dublin, but they have never looked back. Louise has no formal training as a florist and is grateful for that: "I feel liberated by not having any rules to follow."

Her bouquets might include lemons, mangosteens or berries mixed with exceedingly pretty flowers. She has a supplier who brings her wonderful foliage from the tropics, enabling her to use unusual arrangements—such as whole stems of bananas as a centrepiece for a dinner table—in her work.

*Wild Things, 47 Davies Street, W1. Tel: 020 7495 3030.*



BRIGID KEENAN has held senior editorial posts on *The Sunday Times*, *Nova* magazine and *The Observer*.



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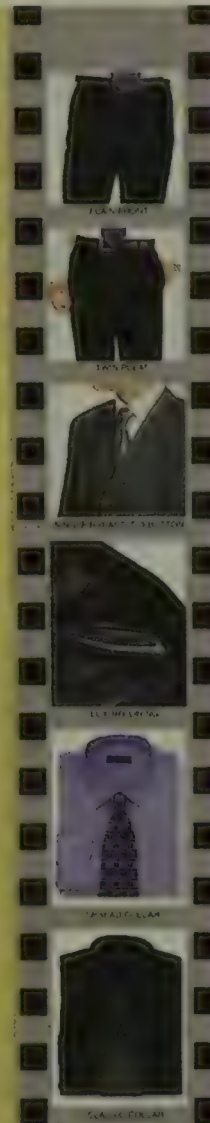
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[fashion]

AS 2001's Spring/Summer fashions hit the stores, the Nasdaq plummeted like a stockbroker from a 44th-floor window on Wall Street, while the FTSE-100 wobbled like the Millennium Bridge. Subscribers to *Forbes* magazine can be forgiven for relegating style to the back burner: single-versus double-breasted is scarcely an issue next to a screen that's screaming "sell!"

It's an old adage that restaurants and designer fashion retailers are the first casualties when the City tightens its belt, but a reverse psychology is gripping the Square Mile. Dress-down days are vanishing like dot.com paper fortunes, and we're seeing a return to tradition. Captains of industry can't face a global recession in chinos and a white T-shirt: this Silicon Valley uniform—which barely took off in Europe—is too closely identified with hi-tech economic disaster.

While Gap CEO Mickey Drexler rang the New York stock exchange opening bell on Friday September 26, 1997, wearing what was to become the "dress-down Friday" uniform of khaki trousers and an open-necked shirt, the lion's share of London firms still dictated pinstripe for men and a skirts policy for women. But, as Bette Midler once quipped: "When it's three o'clock in New York, it's 1936 in Britain." We may hope the time lag will allow London's stock exchange to prepare for the George Bush-generated recession. After all, it already saved the City from getting too entrenched in the US-born dress-down culture.

Casual is, was and always will be anathema to the City. Fortunately, fashion and the financial sector agree on a strict, smart dress code for spring 2001 and beyond. "Sport is looking tired and shoddy," said US *Esquire*'s Stefano Tonchi at Florence's menswear shows this January. Tonchi is one of several leading lights spearheading the dress up aesthetic in designer menswear for summer 2001. "Men aren't comfortable in casual for work," he insists.

The new mood is captured in the recent Gieves & Hawkes advertisement campaign. Design director James Whishaw explains: "We wanted to convey a very correct, public-school image this season, while knocking the stuffing out of the suit and making it sexier." Patricia Field, costume designer for US TV show *The Street* (a Wall Street *Sex and the City*), says: "I'm looking at labels such as Cerruti, Brioni, Ermenegildo Zegna and Donna Karan—status clothes for men who don't have to shout about it. For the women I'm being a little more liberal, mixing vintage pieces with designer ones, but never as high fashion as the *Sex and the City* girls, whose attire is not, quite frankly, appropriate."

Propriety is the key when it comes to City dressing. Fashion, undiluted from the catwalk, is definitely off-menu. So why are fashion brands stalking the Square Mile? Style magazines may focus on Bond and Sloane Streets as London's designer erogenous zones, but the major players are all expanding to the City. Come autumn 2001, The Royal

## Square Mile Style

Gone are the days of dressing down—it's back to business for the world's top designers as traditional tailoring makes a comeback on the fashion runways. By James Sherwood.



For Spring/Summer 2001 fashion draws its reins in and returns to the classic tailoring favoured by the City. Women's trouser suits made a comeback at Calvin Klein, far left, and Dolce & Gabbana, right, while on the menswear catwalks at Versace, Burberry and Cerruti, centre left to right, models stepped out in lightweight, easy-to-wear suits in muted shades.



[fashion]



FOR SPRING 2001 AND BEYOND, FASHION AND THE FINANCIAL SECTOR AGREE ON A STRICT, SMART DRESS CODE.

Exchange luxury boutique development will house City branches of the leading names in fashion, accessories and jewellery. "After 10 years in London's Bond Street, Ermenegildo Zegna believes the time is right to move the brand into the City," says the company's London office. "The City holds our core target market, and its location is convenient for customers who wish to shop during the week." In simple English, these luxury-goods brands understand that the ladies and gentlemen who toil in the Square Mile have both the money and the inclination to shop, but zero time.

City jitters may put orders for James & James' infamous, £20,000, 100 per cent hand-stitched bespoke suits on hold, but they are barely ruffling the feathers of those retailers infiltrating the City's ring of steel. By taking a more traditional direction, the high-fashion industry is playing to City money.

So, if the current fashion is for traditional, why not dig out your old Kilgour French Stanbury? Because tailoring and fabrics have moved on considerably. Suits made during the abdication crisis are simply not going to cut it. Young traders understand the difference between City style 2001 and caricatured 80s suiting from the days when Wall Street's Gordon Gekko was the epitome of fashion.

"We've come a long way from the days when red braces were considered cool," says trader Ben, 35. "But I'm happy to see sharp suits again in magazines such as *FHM* and *Esquire*. Dress-down Friday passed me by. I couldn't do my job properly in trainers, combat trousers

and fleece sweaters. Having said that, I feel like a stiff in a three-piece, chalk-stripe, classic Savile Row suit. I want suits that feel as comfortable as pyjamas but look like they mean business."

Women, it seems, second the motion, although they refuse to return to the primary coloured, gold-buttoned skirt suits championed by Merrill Lynch Investment Managers' departing CEO Carol Galley. Retail analyst Emily, 31, says: "Fashion didn't do professional women any favours in the late 90s with all those floaty skirts and beaded, pastel cardigans. The absence of tailoring in 90s fashion just made professional women turn their backs on designer clothing. I'm relieved to see strong, authoritative shapes return, such as the sexy Marlene Dietrich trouser suit that's looks quite masculine until feminised with heels and a great bag. You flash your fashion credentials with accessories, while keeping the suit discreet. Mine may be new season Yves Saint Laurent by Tom Ford, but it's still a classic black trouser suit that won't frighten the horses."

My money is on super-luxe but super-discreet designer labels. High fashion weathers the storm not by ignoring the economic climate but by assuming a little modesty. Movers and shakers in the City will go to stealth labels such as Zegna, Brioni, Burberry, Alfred Dunhill, Cerruti and Joop! instead of more conspicuous pieces by Dolce & Gabbana, Versace and Fendi.

Fashion has found the third way for summer 2001: neither low-rent suiting from Next nor excess from the good-time Italian designer





Above, left to right, discreet yet de luxe style at Joop!; the traditional English suit gets revamped by Gieves & Hawkes; a softer approach to power dressing at Louise Kennedy; classic tailoring from Savile Row's Alexandre. Left, luxury brand interno 8's new twist on the classic shirt, with "watch cuff" detail.

labels. The message coming through loud and clear for menswear is a return to double-breasted, pleat-front suiting in anonymous fabrics such as herringbone, summer-weight tweed and butter-soft Prince of Wales check. But you can lay odds that Gieves' single-breasted, two-button jacket and skinny, flat-front trouser will also dominate the trading floors. Heavy canvas construction and big, padded shoulders have been erased in favour of the raglan sleeve preferred by Burberry. This year's colour palette comprises the coffee, chocolate, cream and cappuccino-froth tones that Italian labels such as Cerruti, Brioni (who launch a womenswear collection for autumn 2001) and Ermenegildo Zegna understand best.

Lest you believe fashion's new modesty—and the threat of recession—is a passing phase, then consider the Autumn/Winter 2001/02 runway shows for women. In New York, Ralph Lauren, Michael Kors and Calvin Klein showed variations on the conservative town and country style. Tom Ford stuck to his guns at Gucci, as did Yves Saint Laurent with a strict, black, white and burgundy palette for shapes built around the classic tuxedo jacket and cigarette trousers look. This sober mood is designed to give confidence to the City. For the foreseeable future, fashion and the City agree. Enjoy it while you can.

**JAMES SHERWOOD** is a London-based fashion writer for the *Financial Times*, *The New York Times*, *The International Herald Tribune* and *The Independent*.

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[shopping]





# City markets soar

Luxury-brand boutiques, eager to meet the demands of the City's cash-rich, time-poor professionals, are heading east. Avril Groom goes window shopping.

**THE BIGGEST** surprise about the explosion of luxury shopping gathering pace in the City is that it has not happened sooner. Big salaries earned by young people with a penchant for consumer spending have been a feature of City life since the early 1980s. Yet, at that time, only a handful of top luxury names opened in the area to serve them, albeit with considerable success.

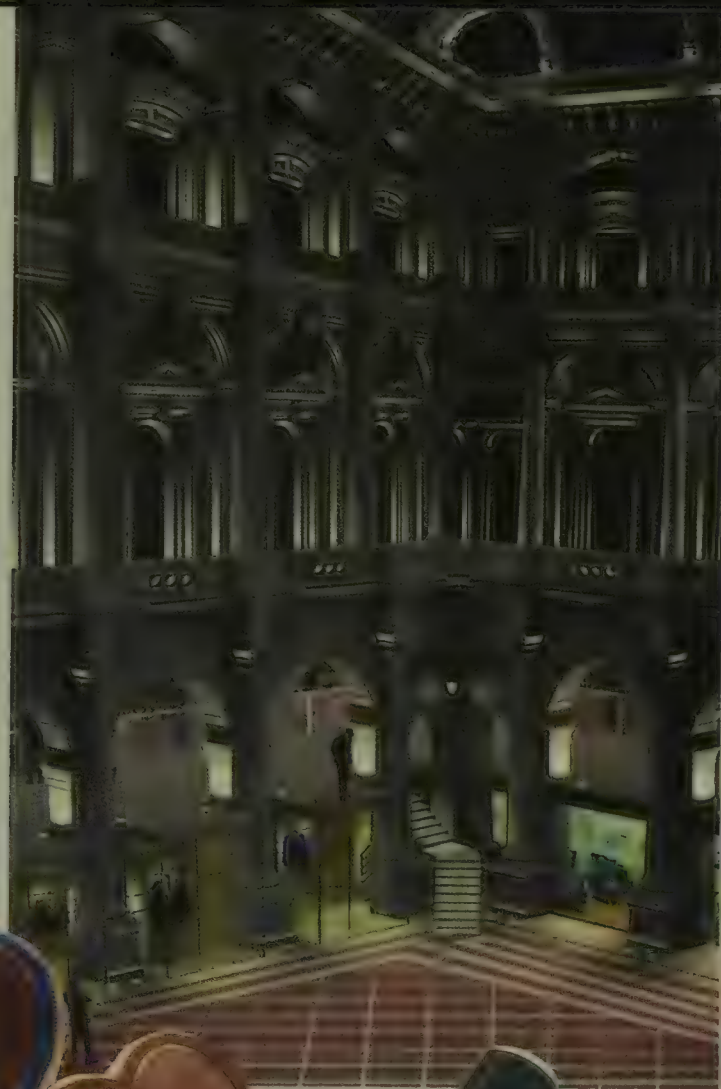
Perhaps it needed a critical financial mass to persuade the biggest brands, and there are signs this has now been reached. Luxury shops are now appearing around the Royal Exchange, with others following on at Leadenhall. Figures are notoriously hard to obtain but chic pen company Montblanc reckons that over 70 per cent of Britons earning more than £100,000 work in the Square Mile. Keith Wilson, of leasing agents Wilson McHardy, adds: "It is alleged on good authority that one in ten central City workers now has a net worth of over £1 million." True or not, having this figure in the public domain has done his firm no harm in their efforts to lease the 12 new shop units and two restaurants in the refurbished Royal Exchange courtyard, once home to the London International Financial Futures Exchange (Liffe).

This development will be the minimalist, steel-and-glass counterpoint to the existing traditional Royal Exchange frontage on Cornhill and Threadneedle Street. When it opens in the autumn it will underline the new momentum fuelling City shopping. Indeed, it is already being touted as an alternative to Bond and Sloane Streets.

But shopping for luxury goods in the City has a far longer history. On the area's western border, where lawyers and the financial community mingle, Ede and Ravenscroft has been purveying bespoke and ready-made clothes, shoes and accessories for men since 1862. Although it has recently added trendy eveningwear and week-end clothes, its ambience remains traditional. Devotees speak of the brilliant service and caring staff—you can return shoes bought here for one of the best polishing services in town. Many a top lawyer relies on it for hand-made court clothing and personalised tailoring, which gives it a different atmosphere from its West End twin at the end of Savile Row, where browsing tourists and impulse buyers play a larger part.

The Ede and Ravenscroft Chancery Lane customer enjoys a clubby atmosphere where the salesman will probably remember his name. Until very recently this was the pattern for any new luxury City shop: items for sale were mainly necessities for men or gifts that men might buy for women displayed in a masculine décor.

Many of the stores successfully exported their style elsewhere, such as shirtmaker Thomas Pink, for which the City was a spiritual home when it started 16 years ago,



Luxury brands Louis Vuitton, left; Ede and Ravenscroft, above; and Montblanc, right, all serve the City, where the Royal Exchange retail development, top, opens this autumn.



IT IS THE RISE OF THE HIGHLY PAID WOMAN THAT HAS MADE THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE TO CITY SHOPPING IN RECENT YEARS



but which has now extended to the West End and beyond under new owners. Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, pink's staple used to be a good-quality £50 cotton shirt, but new demands from women for more fashionable items – and from men for more luxuriously, have changed the profile. T.M. Lewin, the Jermyn Street shirtmaker, also caters for well-dressed City workers with numerous branches in the area.

But it is the rise of the highly paid woman that has made the biggest difference to City luxury shopping in recent years. Louis Vuitton, one of the first real luxury brands to open in the original Royal Exchange development, has noticed a change in its customer base, now 60:40 women to men. Men still drop by to snap up presents for the women in their lives (though they will treat themselves to one of the new black Damier-check briefcases at bonus time), while women buy for themselves, so the shop has a bias to the female. "The customer profile is very different from that in the tourist-orientated West End," says a Vuitton spokesman, "but it is equally a key market. City clients are very loyal. They come back frequently so we change the windows every fortnight to keep it exciting. City women want the latest handbag designs, especially if they see them as status symbols that reflect their salary."

Like other City luxury stores, such as Hermès, the Vuitton shop is smaller than the company's West End flagship, with a narrower range of merchandise tailored to the local market. Look-books and an efficient transfer system whisk in other items if the customer wishes. But nothing will save you the two-year waiting list for one of Hermès' famous £2,000-plus Kelly or Birkin bags. Vuitton's shop in the Royal Exchange has always done a brisk trade in impulse-buy classic silk scarves, ties, and porcelain, but recent salary rises have pushed up the popularity of those legendary bags for which patience is as much a requirement as funds.

The buying power of City women provided the incentive for many established stores to move forward and diversify. Hugo Boss, for instance, has opened a second generation of City men, but had no shop of its own in the Square Mile until this spring when the launch of its first women's range provided the spur for the German company to open a modern store (in Queen Street) for both men and women.

The minimalist women's range has a younger appeal than more classic names and is aimed at style-conscious professionals who lack the time to visit the West End during the day. Interestingly, the store has found that its customers view each current season's designer suit as an essential rather than a luxury, and buy without querying the price.

Sometimes the sexual mix works the other way. Pickett's, two small West End shops are stuffed with an eclectic accessory mix, but are best known for quirky little bags and top-quality pashminas. The City branch opened last year in the Royal Exchange (Cornhill), and the local clientele have rediscovered Pickett's original range of fine, small leathers. Smooth, top-quality briefcases and desk sets have made it a destination for men too. Similarly, Jo Malone's delicious-smelling, cream-coloured shop on the Threadneedle Street side of the Royal Exchange looks, at first sight, packed with pampering girly bathroom and home-environment goodies but



City luxuries, clockwise from above left: a Birkin bag by Hermès; pashminas from Pickett's; accessories and clothing at the Sytner BMW store; high fashion by Louis Vuitton; and giftware from Penhaligon's. Stylish shirts at T.M. Lewin, below left and right, and the Royal Exchange, below centre.



## City Shopping Addresses

**Alfred Dunhill** 5 Royal Exchange, EC3V. Tel: 020 7623 9977.

**BMW Store** 55-58 Cheapside, EC3V. Tel: 020 7246 8400.

**Ede and Ravenscroft** 93 Chancery Lane, WC2A. Tel: 020 7405 3906.

**Gieves & Hawkes** 18 Lime Street, EC3M. Tel: 020 7283 4914.

**Hermès** 3 Royal Exchange, EC3V. Tel: 020 7626 7794.

**Hugo Boss** 85-90 Queen Street, EC4. Tel: 020 7213 9117.

**Jo Malone** 24 Royal Exchange, EC3V. Tel: 020 7444 1999.

**Links of London** 24 Royal Exchange, EC3V. Tel: 020 7623 3101.

**Louis Vuitton** 7 Royal Exchange, EC3V. Tel: 020 7399 4050.

**Montblanc Meisterstück** 10-11 Royal Exchange, EC3V. Tel: 020 7893 4200.

**Penhaligon's** 8 Royal Exchange, EC3V. Tel: 020 7283 0711.

**Pickett's** 6 Royal Exchange, EC3V. Tel: 020 7283 7636.

**Thomas Pink** 16 Culm Street, EC3. Tel: 020 7623 4300.

has built up a thriving trade with men who first bought for women and then discovered its products for themselves, notably the Amber and Lavender fragrance.

Some stores still have an overwhelmingly masculine image, but even these are softening their touch. Gieves & Hawkes, with its bespoke tailoring department, is one of the most traditional men's outfitters, but certain items from its more casual Gieves range are now attracting women for their quality and timelessness. Even Alfred Dunhill has a female following (Madonna is a fan of its cashmere country jacket for shooting) and is decamping from the Cornhill side of the Royal Exchange to an expanded site in the new development as part of its revamped image which emphasises modernity alongside the heritage of its 1930s heyday—particularly when it comes to chic accessories such as watches and pens.

Leading luxury car manufacturers are even getting in on the act. March saw the opening of the new Sytner BMW Store in Cheapside, where customers can discover exclusive accessories and lifestyle clothing or visit the store's internet café to view Sytner's full range of new and used car stock.

Shops with a high giftware quotient are springing up throughout the City. These include Penhaligon's toiletries, Links of London silverware and jewellery, and Montblanc. Clare Crawford of Montblanc suggests additional reasons for the success of these brands in the City. "Lower interest rates mean even higher disposable incomes so City people are more generous with personal gifts, and also the corporate gift market is booming." She also notes that serious shoppers appreciate the City stores' calm atmosphere: "They enjoy considering and choosing a luxury item, not despite the fact it takes time, but because it takes time, which is a luxury in itself."

However, in the main, cash-rich, time-poor City customers do relatively little browsing. Instead, they research and then purchase. They also want exceptional service and the new Royal Exchange development will build on this. Top names who have signed up include Gucci, Prada, Ermengildo Zegna and Richard James, Tiffany, Theo Fennell and Boodle & Dunthorne. Stores will, again, be smaller than their West End counterparts and names such as Gucci and Prada will major on accessories.

Going further, there will also, says Keith Wilson, be a concierge system to deliver items to offices, book restaurants, theatre tickets and so on. He envisages the Royal Exchange as a bustling destination rather than just a service for the City. "With several restaurants, there will be an active evening life and shops are already forecasting longer trading hours. It's within easy reach of the southern and eastern suburbs so we hope eventually it will thrive on Saturdays too," he says. It's a dizzying thought, but perhaps the City is the weekend luxury shopping destination of the future.

**AVRIL GROOM** writes regularly on fashion and luxury shopping for the *Financial Times*, *The Scotsman* and various magazines.





ANGRY MUTTERINGS accompanied the announcement of the membership of the Mayor of London's Cultural Strategy Group last year. How come, it was asked in sniffling letters to newspapers and on radio arts programmes, the mayor had room for a magician to advise on the future of arts in the capital, but no representative of serious music? (The editor of *New Musical Express*, who had been appointed, clearly didn't count.) And why were the world-class arts institutions not better represented? Sir Nicholas Serota, director of the Tate, was listed as a member but, as the promoter of the Turner Prize, he is, to say the least, a somewhat controversial figure.

The Act of Parliament that set up the mayor's office and the new Greater London Authority also provided for and, indeed, required the creation of a Cultural Strategy Group. Bob Harris, who is part of the group and has been involved in arts in the capital for more than a decade, says: "There was an assumption that it would be stuffed with the big arts institutions. The mayor took a more radical view and went for diversity and balance, trying to reflect that thing which is London. I think that upset some of the bigger institutions."

The 24-member group (known these days, in the tiresome way of government bodies, by its acronym, the CSG) is chaired by Yasmin Anwar,

really recovered from being asked by Mrs Thatcher, in the 80s, why we should care about them. The great subsidised arts institutions are starting to have a whiff of cod liver oil and free orange juice about them.

At the same time, there are accusations that the government is conspiring in the dumbing-down of culture. Doris Lessing recently accused New Labour of rubbishing high culture. VS Naipaul intoned: "Every day you hear some minister from this appalling government saying something about things no longer being for the privileged few. It is terrible, this plebeian culture that celebrates itself for being plebeian."

Yet, despite all this uncertainty and anxiety, London is currently one of the world's most culturally exciting cities. In fashion, design, music and a host of related cultural industries, the mood in London is daring, entrepreneurial and cutting edge. Many of these industries have grown up in the private sector, neither needing nor wanting government assistance.

Coming as they do from a deliberately diverse range of backgrounds, the members of the Cultural Strategy Group have a range of responses to all this. Broadly, though, they would like us to believe that the supporters of "high" culture have nothing to fear. "There's no need for anyone to be scared," says Nicolas Kent, director of the Tricycle Theatre in Kilburn, where he put on the successful and memorable play about Stephen Lawrence, *The Colour of Justice*. "We're trying to spread out provision to everyone. Ken is aware that both 'high' art and 'low' art have a place. He wants the best art, the most challenging and entertaining, to reach the largest number of people."

All very admirable in theory but, in practice, there will have to be what Aladin, the magician who upset the serious musicians, calls "some redressing of asymmetries. It is widely recognised that arts funding is biased towards the centre, away from informal and local culture." It seems quite likely that the right-wing press will have an opportunity to take pot-shots at the mayor, just as they did at the GLC, for favouring minorities over the mainstream.

The big difference, though, is that the GLA will not be a grant-giving body, doling out subsidies. Given that there is no pot of culture

## Live culture

Geraldine Bedell meets the people who are dedicated to ensuring that London remains one of the world's leading cultural capitals.

commissioning editor for multicultural programmes at Channel 4. It brings together, for example, Yvonne Ahmed, a former England netball player; Esrah Ahmed, a Bangladeshi writer who is active in dance, music and club culture; the theatrical Piers Gough; and Chinedu Aniedobe, a comedy promoter and community worker. In theory, they all applied for their positions from open advertisements, but in practice, some were invited. Their remit is to produce a draft cultural strategy for the capital by this July, to put it out for consultation in September, and to publish it early next year. This is no small matter, given the range of activities—from sport to clubbing, opera to tourism—that the group is expected to take into consideration.

Their task is further complicated by the current contested state of culture in Britain. Richard Eyre, from the heart of the (financial) establishment, recently described theatre in Britain as "moribund". The Royal Opera House has lurched from one crisis to another. The media mogul at a Royal Academy meeting said: "The Institute of Contemporary Arts director, Philip Dodd, argues that the traditional recipients of major funding have not

money at the mayor's disposal, the cultural strategy will have to be supported by Londoners if it is to bring moral force to bear on the quangos responsible for arts funding in the capital. (These include the London Arts Board, the London Museums Council, the London Office of Sport and Leisure, the London Libraries Development Agency.) Aladin, deputy chair of the CSG, is in charge of the consultation process. He hopes it will result in "the cultural strategy being owned by Londoners, mandated by them, reflecting what they are all about."

The son of an East Pakistani diplomat father and Assamese mother, Aladin, real name Enasul Fateh, studied at the London School of Economics, where his specialisation in syndicated loans to countries coincided with the debt crisis, launching him into a career advising banks and, later, multinationals on their exposure to debt. He also got involved in youth and charity work and, in 1990, gave up the City to become a community worker, using his magic to go into housing estates and engage with street gangs. He is an entirely self-taught magician and insists: "My use of magic is not to accentuate differences, but to create an emotionally charged atmosphere. Good magic is about high-quality exchange, not about power. It gives me no more power than saying 'hello' first."

Aladin does a series of tricks for me over a table in the Café Rouge in Hampstead, where we meet to talk about the Cultural Strategy Group.

A cultural strategy for London is due to be published in 2002. A recent meeting of the Cultural Strategy Group to discuss the future of arts in the capital included, front row, left to right: CSG members Nicolas Kent, Aladin (deputy chair) and Jennette Arnold; London Development Agency board member George Kessler; and CSG members Yasmin Anwar (chair) and Elizabeth Howlett. On stairs, from top: CSG member Chinedu Aniedobe; the mayor's policy advisor on culture Claudia Webb; CSG members Bob Harris, Richard Sumray and Yvonne Ahmed; chair of the London Arts Board Lady Hollick; and CSG member Sally Hamme.





Normally, I don't care for magic, which I associate with being deceived. But there is something very engaging and unshowy about Aladin's tricks. I am not made to feel like a foil, still less a fool, but rather a participant in a funny and charming game.

After one trick, in which he has asked me to think of a card, go two up or down, change suit, hey, change card if I want, he produces the very card I was thinking of in the pouch on the table between us. I admit to being enchanted, but at a loss to know what he's done. "I rely heavily on non-verbal cues," he says, "and I didn't know how that one was going to end." Magic, for him, is about mystery, rather than power.

Aladin explains that the mayor has three reference points for all of his strategies: they must be inclusive; sustainable; and able to reflect London's diversity. (It has been predicted, to take one, vital example of diversity, that by 2010, London will be 30 per cent non-white.) Aladin believes that if the Cultural Strategy Group can come up with something that answers these demands and is exciting, "the commercial sector will be new partners in funding". The hope is that the mayor won't simply have to slice up the pie differently but that the cultural strategy will actually get him a bigger pie.

"We will be mapping the cultural contours of London," Aladin says, "which means that the cultural strategy will be a reference point for all statutory and Trust funders in London. Some of the things we will want to support will be mainstream and high-profile; others will be locally rooted, community-based, outsider arts." He suggests the example of a refugee group that meets to exchange stories and songs, which is bringing up its second-generation Londoners with an additional cultural heritage, derived from their parents' background. "We're not against anything. We recognise the indivisibility of culture, but there are certain areas of culture that were denigrated in the past. Our starting point is that the only areas of culture worth supporting are those that are proposed by the population."

So far, so good. But what is this actually going to mean for Londoners? Inevitably, the CSG members have slightly different views. Lyn Brown, a Newham councillor and chair of the London Libraries Development Agency, is influenced by having grown up in the Newham Docklands. "When I got to college, I simply hadn't had the depth and richness of education that most of the people there had received. I want my children in Newham to have the same opportunities as the children in Surrey, at a price they can afford, knowing it's for them."



Brown cites, approvingly, a recent initiative by The Gulbenkian Foundation to sell cut-price tickets for the Royal Opera House in Stratford Market. "But the strategy should also be about taking seriously short-mat bowls, line dancing, the classical dance of the Asian community, and the Kurds using theatre to express their distress."

Bob Harris, a Greenwich councillor, who is also the chair of culture and tourism for the body that represents all 33 London boroughs, expects the cultural strategy to be "a bit like a state-of-the-nation address—this is where we are". He hopes it will lead to perhaps four undertakings for the mayor's first term. These might include the capital arts card, an idea floated in Ken Livingstone's manifesto, which would allow cheaper access to cultural activities for the less well off, or free transport to cultural events. It might, perhaps, mean the mayor deciding that London should bid for the Olympic games in 2012. It could, conceivably, involve getting all West End theatres to allow groups of schoolchildren into matinées free of charge when they aren't full.

## Strategies must be inclusive and reflect London's diversity.

Bob Harris anticipates that the cultural strategy will feed into the mayor's other priorities for London. Ken has, for example, promised a 24-hour transport structure, which will improve life for people who want to go clubbing or to late-night cinemas. "The mayor is a powerful figure who can advocate for London," Harris argues. "He can tell transport to make fares cheaper for young people, and so make different parts of London work together. He can get the big arts institutions into a room and ask why they aren't

doing more for London's kids, or go to the Corporation of London and say, I want this for every deaf child in the capital."

Harris acknowledges that the CSG faces a challenge to comprehend all the different cultural forms within its remit. "I don't think there will be a chapter on sport, and another on tourism—it's much more likely to be a series of themes. I don't even know if it will be a written document. It might end up as a film. I hope it will be capable of change; a series of milestones on the way to making London the funkiest place in the world."

A few years ago, a report by Coopers & Lybrand sought to establish the criteria for a world city, which included its political centrality, business activity and cultural life. The authors concluded that there were only three world cities: New York, Tokyo and London. The very different members of the mayor's Cultural Strategy Group are charged with not only helping to keep it that way, but also with edging London out in front.

They will have to avoid becoming another layer of bureaucracy, because bureaucracy is the enemy of culture. But, Bob Harris insists that all art, even the privatised, cultural-industries type, relies heavily on state involvement and probably, at some stage, subsidy. "I doubt there's an actor, performer, designer or musician who hasn't gone through some form of public subsidy. Without education, community centres, libraries, adult education, clubs and societies, culture cannot flourish."

The Cultural Strategy Group communicates by email and, so far, has had a couple of getting-to-know-you sessions and one really good debate. Bob Harris says: "It would be dishonest to say that it had got really exciting yet." But the potential is there. And London's cultural life has the potential to make this the most pleasurable, interesting, vital city in the world. "I believe you can solve it all through culture," Bob Harris says. "I have spent years fighting, because culture is often the last thing on the agenda. But the mayor knows that he's got to keep London at the cutting edge."

**GERALDINE BEDELL** is a novelist and journalist. Her most recent book is *A Fabulous Fling*, published by HarperCollins.

CSG members Nick Serota, top, director of the Tate, and Piers Gough, architect, are united in their aim to enhance London's role as a world cultural capital.



[ILN promotion]

# Oasis in the City

Champneys' luxurious new City health club provides a workout for the mind as well as the body.



Whether you want to swim, join an exercise class, work out in the gym or simply relax, CityPoint has it all.

IMAGINE A HEALTH club where there are no queues for equipment, which provides an oasis of calm in the heart of the City, and where the emphasis is as much about recharging the spirit and relaxing the mind as it is about physical fitness.

Champneys CityPoint made all this a reality when it opened in April. The club recognises that the pace of life in the City is fast—faster than it has ever been—and that physical and mental fitness is vital to a successful professional life. That's why CityPoint has limited membership, high staff ratios and 32,000sq m of space, which means no crowds and no queuing, just peace.

Into this lavish space, Champneys has introduced 35 of the very latest hi-tech cardiovascular Technogym machines, each of which, for the first time in Britain, has its own 15in flat-screen monitor so clients can tune into the TV or music channel of their choice. Combine this with the fact that each machine is set well apart from the next, and exercising becomes an altogether more pleasant, personal experience.

Spinning, the workout phenomenon using special exercise bikes, took the fitness world by storm when it launched a few years ago, and Champneys has taken the concept one stage further with its dedicated spinning studio. Here, a virtual journey is projected on to a wall so members can experience the sensation of cycling up and down alpine roads, along stunning coast roads or through lush countryside, making the virtual journey as enjoyable as a real bike ride.

If the gym isn't your thing, there are two squash courts, a 20 x 10m swimming pool and two exercise rooms. In keeping with the club's holistic approach, the classes include everything from aerobics and bodypump to Astanga yoga and t'ai chi.

After a strenuous workout, those on a time budget can take advantage of the revolutionary Aquamassage treatment that has made its debut at CityPoint: 36 high-pressure water jets are used to give clients the equivalent of a full-body massage in just 10 to 15 minutes. Members remain fully clothed (a waterproof sheet covers the body), allowing an effective massage in the minimum time. Best of all, members feel as relaxed as if they had just enjoyed a full hour-long traditional massage.

Champneys has been developing spa treatments since 1925, and CityPoint has nine treatment rooms offering over 50 therapies including reflexology, shiatsu, aromatherapy and Thai yoga massage, as well as more traditional beauty treatments. To nurture the mind and soothe the soul, the club also has a dedicated relaxation room with an aquarium wall—a place where members can relax in calm tranquillity.

And to round off a visit to CityPoint, the members' bar serves a range of drinks from healthy, freshly squeezed juices to a well-deserved glass of wine, while CityPoint's chef provides a selection of tasty, delicious meals to eat in or take away.

In addition to full membership, the club also offers a selection of day packages from £120 per person, where non-members can experience a day of treatments and use all the club's facilities.

Champneys CityPoint is at 1 Ropemaker Street, London EC2, within easy reach of Moorgate, Liverpool Street, Barbican and Farringdon tubes. For more details on the club and membership details call CityPoint on 020 7920 6200 or visit the website at [www.champneyscitypoint.com](http://www.champneyscitypoint.com)



## Win a day of luxury

Win a day of luxury at Champneys CityPoint. The day includes a full-body Aquamassage treatment, a Thai yoga massage, a facial, a manicure, a pedicure, a hair treatment, a massage, a spa treatment, a gym session, a swimming pool session, a squash session, a t'ai chi session, a yoga session, a Pilates session, a barre session, a dance session, a fitness session, a personal training session, a nutrition consultation, a health assessment, a lifestyle assessment, a stress management session, a relaxation session, a meditation session, a mindfulness session, a breathwork session, a sound healing session, a crystal healing session, a reiki session, a chakra balancing session, a aura cleansing session, a energy healing session, a spiritual healing session, a soul healing session, a heart healing session, a mind healing session, a body healing session, a spirit healing session, a life healing session, a love healing session, a happiness healing session, a success healing session, a wealth healing session, a abundance healing session, a prosperity healing session, a power healing session, a confidence healing session, a self-love healing session, a self-esteem healing session, a self-worth healing session, a self-respect healing session, a self-compassion healing session, a self-forgiveness healing session, a self-acceptance healing session, a self-empowerment healing session, a self-actualisation healing session, a self-realisation healing session, a self-fulfilment healing session, a self-actualisation healing session, a self-realisation healing session, a self-fulfilment healing session.



# Karaoke meets afternoon tea

The long relationship between the people of Japan and Britain is captured in a selection of portraits from a forthcoming exhibition spanning nearly 150 years.

**BOTH ARE** small countries with big influence. Both are islands. Both have monarchies and both were once imperial nations: Britain and Japan have a lot in common. If theirs was a marriage, it would have been a long and happy one—with World War II representing the only rough patch in the middle. The first Japanese came to Britain in the 1860s when the country's brightest young people were sent here to study. "The gap between the countries was enormous at that time," says Setsuo Kato, editor of the London-based Japanese newspaper *Nichi-Ei Times*. "Japan was so backward. It had closed its door to the rest of the world for 260 years. Some of the first students to come kept diaries that record their absolute amazement at Western civilisation."

By the 1920s, the Japanese population in London had swelled to 1,500 and a community was starting to form. Japanese newspapers were launched and noodle restaurants sprang up in the West End. Most of the Japanese community at this time were the élite—wealthy, well-educated businessmen and diplomats who led elegant lives.

"The relationship between the two countries was very good in the 20s," says Keiko Itoh, a writer on Anglo-Japanese history. "There were enough Japanese people to make a comprehensive community and there was good interaction with the British."

The relationship soured in the 30s with the war between Japan and China, and in the early 40s with Japan's attack on Singapore. When World War II broke out, most Japanese left Britain. Around 400 or so remained, but kept a low profile. The years from 1940 until 1955 were the quietest in the history of the two countries, but, by 1955, the Japanese had started returning to London and the 60s marked a new beginning.

Spurred by Margaret Thatcher's encouragement of foreign investment, the 1980s marked a boom for Japanese investment in Britain. Most Japanese manufacturers had a base in the UK by the end of the decade. "The 1980s totally changed the British perception of the Japanese," says Kato. "For the first time they were seen to be helping the British economy. They invested billions and employed people." Today, there are around 56,000 Japanese people in the UK, of which 40,000 are in London. Most are only here for a few years, but 9,000 are permanent residents.

Professor Ian Nish, emeritus professor of international history at the London School of Economics and Political Science, believes now is one of the most harmonious times in the relationship's history. "The British population is better informed about Japan than ever before: it's a time of great understanding between the countries."

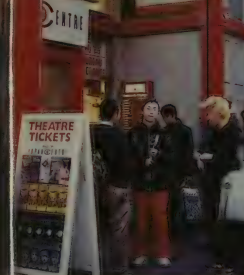
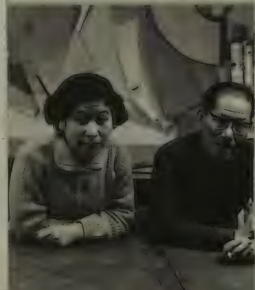
The Japanese community originally settled in St John's Wood and Hampstead in the 20s and 30s. In the 70s there was an influx of young Japanese families who moved into the areas surrounding Camden, where the Japanese School was set up in 1976. In 1987, the school moved to Acton and the Japanese migrated with it. Now, the biggest concentration of Japanese is in Ealing and Acton, followed by Hampstead and St John's Wood. Outside London, the biggest concentration of Japanese is in Wales where Sony, Panasonic and Hitachi are based, followed by Scotland and Sunderland.

And while Britain is in the midst of Japanese fever—minimalist interiors, karaoke and Hello Kitty—the lifestyle bug has also bitten Japan. There, all things English are the trend of the moment, including afternoon tea, DIY and English gardens. (SR) ▶

▶ **2001:** The first Japanese in Britain is part of Japan 2001, a year-long festival that will celebrate the 130th anniversary of the opening of the first Japanese consulate in London. The festival will be at Guy's Japan House, 13 Cornwall Terrace, London N1 from September 10-15. For more information about the country before returning to the Gunpowder Museum in Tower of London, visit [www.gunpowdermuseum.co.uk](http://www.gunpowdermuseum.co.uk) or visit the website at [www.japan2001.org.uk](http://www.japan2001.org.uk)



**▲ Early 1930s: Portrait of the Yamanaka family**  
Chushi and Winifred Yamanaka with their children Joyce Suga (born 1921), John Chushi (1923) and Edward Yukio (1924) at the family home in Teddington. Chushi arrived in Britain in 1916, the son of a prominent family in Osaka who owned a jewellery business. He came to Britain to represent the family company in London, but left the business when he married Winifred in 1920 and set up his own wholesale jewellery business. He spent the war years in a prison camp in India and returned to Japan in 1946, where he had sent his first son John to study at the beginning of the war. John was drafted into the Imperial Japanese Navy while his brother Edward was called up to join the Royal Navy. The family was physically torn apart by war: Chushi and John stayed in Japan—Chushi became a successful businessman and John a prominent journalist—while Winifred, Joyce and Teddy remained in Britain.



**▶ 2001: Japan Centre, Piccadilly Circus** The Japan Centre started life in Finchley, in 1976, as London's first Japanese language bookshop. It moved to Piccadilly in 1988 and now sells Japanese food, CDs, magazines and books, and generally serves expatriate Japanese in London. With its community noticeboards and free newspapers, the centre has become a meeting point for young Japanese.

**▶ 1960: Actor Kenji Takaki and his wife Mitsu**  
Kenji Takaki became a naturalised British citizen in 1936 and joined the British Merchant Marines. His boat was captured by the Germans in 1940 and he spent the war years in Mitag Nord Camp near Bremen. After he was released, he returned to Britain and became a Japanese language teacher. He was scouted to perform in plays and films, including *The Long and the Short and the Tall* with Peter O' Toole at the Royal Court Theatre in 1958.



**▲ 1974: Mamoko Williams with her husband Michael and son Nathan, 7, in Hampstead Heath**  
The couple met in Tokyo in 1965 where Michael was teaching. They returned to England a year later, married and had two children, Nathan in 1971 and Yuk-Jane in 1974. When Mamoko came to Britain there was no community for the Japanese. She started working as an interpreter and is now a media coordinator. She was a founder of the Japanese Residents' Association.

**◀ 1937: A garden party at the Hurlingham Club**  
A garden party was held at the Hurlingham Club in London in honour of Princess Princess Chichibu who were visiting England for the coronation of King George VI. Most of the Japanese community in London—around 600 people—would have attended the party. At this time only wealthy Japanese would have lived in London, mostly businessmen and diplomats.

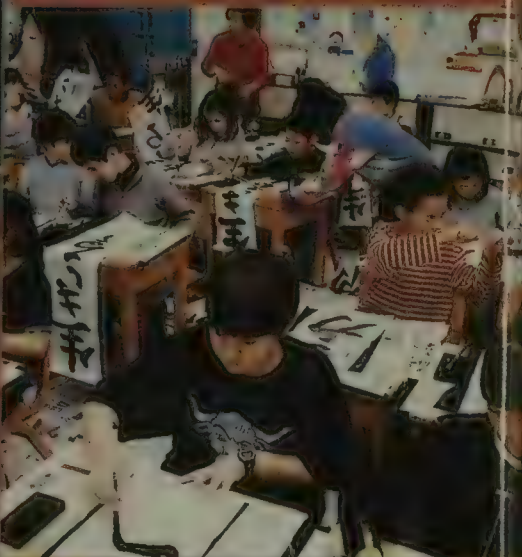
**▼ 2000: Westerners eating sushi in a Japanese restaurant**  
Japanese culture has never been cooler. Below, a Londoner, wearing a kimono with Japanese animal characters, eats sushi at Akasaka in Romington Crescent.







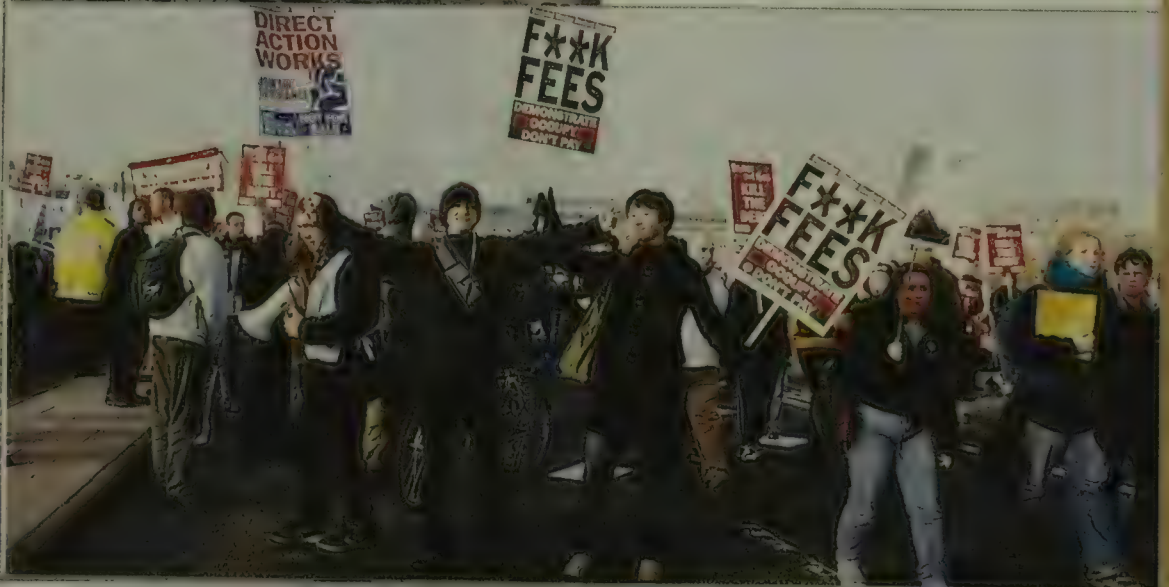
► **1863: The Chosu Five at University College, London** These were some of the first Japanese to study in London. When Japan was still under seclusion, five young samurai from the powerful Chosu domain were smuggled out of the country to study in Britain at University College. Of the five, Hirobumi Ito and Kaoru Inoue returned to Japan after one year and assumed major roles in the Meiji Restoration of 1868. The others—Yozo Yamao, Masaru Inoue and Kinsuke Endo—went on to study at Glasgow University and were given senior positions in the new Meiji government when they returned.



▲ **2000: Yukio Matt'motto and his taxi Yukio**, a musician from Sapporo, has been living in London for six years. He bought his cab two years ago for £650 for private use, because he was fascinated by its shape, style and "because it's a British symbol".

◀ **1961: Japanese house at the Ideal Home Exhibition in Edinburgh** The Japanese community was still very small in the UK at this time. Many of them congregated at an example of a Japanese house at the Ideal Home Exhibition in 1961. On the far right is Kumajiro Torii, a master wood-carver, who arrived in Britain in 1910 for the Japan-British Exhibition, and stayed on.

▼ **2000 Students at a rally in London** Yosuke Aoki (left) and Togo Uchida, both students at Bradford University, take part in a march across Waterloo Bridge against fees.







**2000: A Saturday class at The Japanese School in Acton**

The school was founded in 1976 in Camden for children aged between six and 15. It has always followed the Japanese curriculum and is attended by the children of business people working in London. The school moved to Acton in 1987 and now has 580 pupils. There is also a Saturday School with 1,400 pupils—a place for Japanese children who go to English schools, to learn their native language. Here, children practise their brush writing. It's a tradition at the beginning of the year to write out a motto, or a New Year's resolution, in brush writing.



**2000: Sumie Takahashi, master of classical ikebana**

(flower arranging) Sumie, who has lived in this country since 1971, teaches traditional Japanese flower arranging at the huge supermarket, Oriental City, in Colindale. She also provides classes at her home in Maidenhead, not just in ikebana but also in the art of the Japanese tea ceremony, in a special room with reed carpet on the floor. The tea ceremony classes attract mainly Japanese ladies whose husbands are working in London.

**1925: Baroness Hide Tomii** The baroness was the wife of Baron Tomii, First Secretary at the Japanese Embassy, and was presented at Court in 1925. It was a custom for Embassy wives to be presented to Court when they arrived in Britain. Baroness Tomii participated fully in English life—she was also a keen horsewoman who enjoyed hunting and also played golf.

## A rich and varied relationship

- 1853:** American Commodore Matthew Perry arrives in Uraga Bay. Until now Japan had pursued a seclusion policy for over two centuries.
- 1862:** Rutherford Alcock, first British minister to Japan, arranges a display of Japanese arts and crafts in the UK—a first insight into the Japanese way of life for the British.
- 1863:** The earliest Japanese students arrive in Britain
- 1868:** The Meiji Government is established with its motto *fukoku kyohei* ("enrich the country, strengthen the military"). A steady flow of students start to study abroad.
- 1884:** The Japanese government officially records the number of Japanese residents in Britain for the first time—264. Most are students and government officials, with a few businessmen, craftsmen and entertainers
- 1885:** A Japanese Village opens in Knightsbridge. Japanese artisans help design authentic costumes and scenery for Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado*, at the Savoy Theatre
- 1891:** The Japan Society is established as a meeting ground for British men of culture and prominent members of the Japanese community.
- 1910:** The Japan-British Exhibition at White City is organised to show Japan's artistic and cultural tradition, and its new economic and political status. By 1911 there are more than 500 Japanese residents in Britain.
- 1914-1918:** World War I is a turning point for Japanese presence in Britain. Japan's industry develops at a rapid rate and its exports jump to overtake imports.
- 1920:** The number of Japanese in Britain increases to over 1,500. London is the most important posting for Japanese diplomats, military personnel and businessmen.
- 1936:** A communal burial plot in Hendon Park Cemetery is acquired to create a final resting place for Japanese who made Britain their home.
- 1937:** Prince and Princess Chichibu visit Britain, representing the Emperor at the coronation of George VI. Over 600 members of the community assemble to welcome the couple at a garden party at the Hurlingham Club in London
- 1937:** After Japan begins full-scale war in China, in July, relations between Britain and Japan become strained.
- 1941:** With the outbreak of the Pacific War in December, Britain and Japan become enemy nations and some Japanese businessmen are interned on the Isle of Man.
- 1942:** Exchange repatriation of the Japanese in Britain and the British in the Far East takes place. There are only about 400 Japanese left in Britain during the war years.
- 1953:** For the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, the Crown Prince of Japan makes the first post-war visit of a member of the Japanese Imperial family to Britain. The Japanese population remains at about 400 until 1955, doubling to about 800 by 1960.
- 1962:** The Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty is signed creating a climate of enhanced trade. The Japanese presence in Britain rises to nearly 3,000 during the 60s and the Japanese develop a fascination for Britain.
- 1966:** The Beatles visit Japan, sparking an outbreak of British fever, consolidated in 1967 when Twiggy also visits.
- 1970s:** Japan starts to invest in Britain's less-developed areas, setting up 12 companies in Britain during the decade.
- 1980s:** Japan's economy booms. By the end of the 80s nearly 200 Japanese manufacturing companies are established and the Japanese population is nearly 45,000.
- 1981:** The Great Japan Exhibition is mounted by the Japanese government, resulting in artistic cooperation between Britain and Japan
- Japanese performing arts become part of the mainstream British arts scene
- 1991:** Japan Festival is mounted at the height of Japan's economic boom, and in the year that marked the centenary of the Japan Society.
- Today:** The 55,000-strong Japanese in Britain have become part of a multi-ethnic society, with cultural mixing that goes beyond national distinctions.



Screen-painters at work in the Japanese Village.



Prince Chichibu who visited Britain in 1937.



[lifestyle]

# On EC Street

Demand for property in central London has never been so great. David Spittles visits the new inner-city hot spots fast becoming *the* places to live.

THE UNDISPUTED success of Tate Modern symbolises a shifting geography in central London. Two years ago, the SE1 postcode was regarded as a fringe area. Today, it is booming on the back of frantic development activity, and local planners have reinvented the area as "South Central". Together with Clerkenwell and trendy Shoreditch, on the eastern side of the City, these inner-city districts have become property hot spots, where the best lofts and slickest apartments are as expensive as the most exclusive homes in Knightsbridge and Kensington.

The market is being fuelled by media workers and rich finance-sector executives based in Canary Wharf, and estate agents have also reported on buyers migrating from parts of south-west London—the yuppie havens of the 60s—thanks to the trendy scene in these "new era" locations. Improved transport links, such as the extended Jubilee Line, are certainly a key factor in the increasing popularity of these areas, but another market phenomenon is attracting buyers: walk-to-work commuting. Increasingly, busy employees want to live within walking distance of the office, or at least have a weekday pied-à-terre to minimise commuting.

Developers have responded quickly to the growing demand for property. The availability of studios and one-bedroom apartments will be greater this year than in any year since 1988. The buzz phrase among developers is "lifestyle housing". Brand-new homes and those in converted buildings are proving to have a more glamorous appeal than period houses, but the designer interiors are not the only attraction. Many new apartment schemes have underground parking, 24-hour security, a round-the-clock concierge service and a health and fitness club, and some even incorporate amenities such as restaurants and bars.

The development boom is set to continue for some

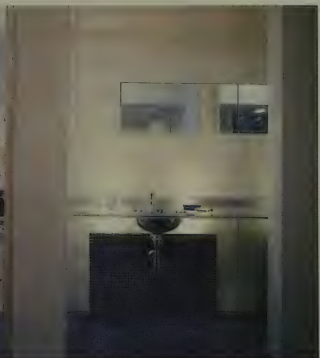
time yet, but this disguises a supply shortage of new homes in inner London. It is not just the renaissance of city-centre living that has triggered this shortage—housebuilders often lose out to office developers for the best sites. Two years ago, residential accounted for 20 per cent of development in the City; today, the figure is more like 12 per cent. In addition, a quarter of the 197 residential schemes with planning permission across London also have consent for office use.

The live/work trend is also driving inner-city demand. Already, about one third of residential planning consents in inner London are live/work units. Such homes are about 15 per cent cheaper than the equivalent residential space, but estate agents are predicting that this price divide will probably equalise within three years, which means that current buyers will be able to achieve higher profits on resale. Peter Braithwaite of estate agent DTZ Residential also points out that "locations close to major employment areas will continue to grow in value". He ties the City fringe and Docklands as well as Covent Garden, Holborn and Bloomsbury.

A single property market does not exist in the capital. Instead, it is made up of a collection of micro markets, which makes it increasingly unwise to make blanket judgments about any given area. Clued-up buyers are now targeting streets, rather than areas, to live in, and even particular buildings in those streets, which is why most analysts believe that the best homes (those with the right combination of location, specification and price) will increase in value.

Design quality is another increasingly important factor in a property's appeal. Developers who come up with new ideas and building materials can successfully put image and style on a par with location. This explains the rise of gritty, street-cred districts (mostly

Above, home buyers are attracted to the stylishly designed interiors and the inner-city locations of converted buildings. Clockwise from top right, a sleek, modern warehouse apartment in Nile Street, close by City Road; the crisp, intimate interior of St Saviours House, a converted office/warehouse near Tower Bridge; and the show apartment at the "perspective" development in a former office building at 100 Westminster Bridge Road.



## Size matters

Developers are responding to the search for value by quoting prices in pounds per square foot. Many buyers now think in terms of square feet rather than number of bedrooms, according to Cluttons. The advantage is that it gives you an immediate insight into value as well as size.

Across London, homes typically range from about £200 per sq ft (Woolwich) to about £800 per sq ft. You can, however, pay much more. Within the 6207 telephone band, anything less than £300 per sq ft is now considered cheap.

One-bedroom apartments usually cost more on a square-foot basis than bigger homes. Rarely are they more than 700sq ft in size, usually about 500sq ft. Two-bedroom apartments start at about 650sq ft and are considered lavish if they are more than 1,250sq ft. Lofts are not generally less than 1,000sq ft, but are often over 2,000sq ft.





in east and south London), where builders are making the most of the urban environment while at the same time providing unfamiliar luxuries in a neighbourhood of council flats and curry houses. Such is the potential that even council tower blocks are being earmarked for gentrification.

The government has set a target of 23,000 new homes per year within London—a 22 per cent increase on current build rates—which means that developers are scrambling for the best brownfield sites. Rapid inner-city regeneration is consequently pushing up property values, and concern remains for young buyers being priced out of the market (homes for low-paid key workers is also a big issue). However, first-time buyers have less of an impact on the new homes market in central London, where the major players tend to be overseas investors and corporate high-flyers. In fact, research by estate-agent Lane Fox, which operates at the upper end, shows that 45 per cent of its purchasers are thirty-somethings who work in finance or IT. Many of these buy "off-plan" before the property has been built, and often find prices have risen before they've even moved in.

## Hot developments

The last big development in Clerkenwell has been unveiled by Berkeley Homes. Called **The Edge @ Clerkenwell Square**, it is a mixed-use scheme on the site of the old Allied Domecq brewery. More than 200 homes are to be built alongside new offices, a supermarket and a retail plaza. Dutch architect Erick van Egeraat has come up with a modernist design with glass, box-shaped apartments of simplistic elegance. "It is a stunning piece of conceptual design," says David Rick, Berkeley's sales and marketing director. For all of Clerkenwell's design credentials there is little show-piece contemporary architecture to turn the heads of passers-by. The Edge will become a talked-about building, and will certainly bring critical mass to the area—some 4,000 people will work there when it is complete.

Some of the homes will be sold off-plan, and completions will be phased throughout 2003, with prices expected to start at about £225,000 for a one-bedroom apartment. "Everyone knows Clerkenwell is a media village, but many City workers now see it as an attractive place to live as well," says David Salvi of local estate-agent Hurford Salvi Carr.

CYZ, a small development company, has launched a scheme of just four apartments, part of a **converted warehouse in St John's Lane, Clerkenwell**. "It is all about quality materials and slick design," says Tim Carr,



**One of the latest trends in inner-city living is the live/work unit—top, a flat combining a gallery and workshop in Spitalfields, and, above, the patio area of a warehouse on Tysoe Street which Galliard Homes is converting into six live/work homes.**

managing director. The homes are likely to range from £850,000 to £1.3 million. If this is out of your price bracket, however, Galliard Homes is converting a warehouse in **Tysoe Street, close to Sadler's Wells and Angel**, into six live/work homes, priced from £315,000 to £400,000.

South of the river, close to Waterloo, a former office building is being transformed into 180 stylish apartments by Nicholson Estates. Called "perspective", the development has an impressive address: **100 Westminster Bridge Road**. The 60s building is being given a complete architectural makeover. Reclad in steel, glass and terracotta, the building will have a wave-form roof that will incorporate double-height glazed penthouses, which will be an eye-catching addition to the skyline.

There will be secure underground parking, a concierge service available 24-hours a day, and a meeting room for the use of residents. Many of the apartments have already been snapped up by investors and are likely to be sold on when the development is completed next year, but some are still for sale, priced from £370,000.

Shad Thames, on the south side of the river

by **Tower Bridge**, has already established itself as a fashionable quarter. The riverside restaurants are a popular attraction and the best warehouse apartments sell for £1.5 million. **St Saviours House** is a converted office/warehouse tucked behind the frontline. Twelve apartments have been created, plus two interesting new live/work houses—each a different shape and some with high ceilings, ranging from 770sq ft to 1,800sq ft.

Developer Indi Johal has set a new design standard. "We are selling design quality that will have longevity," he says. "We haven't opted for faddish trends." As a design stamp, the interiors could be classified as "modern cosy" and include custom-built, walnut kitchens with Miele appliances (including a built-in steam oven).

Floors are solid maple, leather and slate, and there is concealed intelligent lighting, network cabling and wiring for a plasma television screen that can also be used for video security. Features such as comfort cooling, under-floor heating, brushed-steel ironmongery and walk-in showers, together with the solid-wood doors and other bespoke carpentry, which was undertaken by Tawse, a Royal Warrant holder, give the apartments an impressive retro look. Prices start at £295,000. No parking is included, but the development is only a short walk away from Tower Bridge.

**DAVID SPITTLES** writes on property for London's *Evening Standard* and is currently completing a book, *Lofts of London*, to be published by Tectum later this year.

**Hurford Salvi Carr:**

020 7250 1012

**Cluttons:** 020 7407 3669

**Hamptons International:**  
020 7824 8822

**City & Urban:** 020 7864 9933

**Stirling Ackroyd:**

020 7940 3888

**Frank Harris:** 020 7600 7000





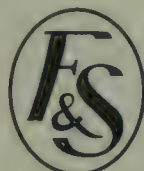
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# Feasts in the East

Turn your back on the West End and go east instead—the City is home to an unexpected variety of gastronomic gems, writes Charles Campion.

THE CITY may owe its origins to coffee houses such as Lloyds, but eating out has never been one of its strong points. Deals have long been sealed by hailing a cab and decamping to the West End for a decent lunch. As for the evening, its echoing streets became a no-man's land inhabited by loners spinning out the time until the last train departed for the wildest reaches of outer Essex.

Great news! Everything has changed. Maybe it's a consequence of just how expensive restaurant real estate has become in the rest of London, or maybe it's a sign of the increasing sophistication of the dining public, but now there are restaurants in, and near to, the City for which it's worth making a special journey. Together, they tell the story of just how far City dining has come over recent years.

**Sweetings** is something of a benchmark for City restaurants—it has cultivated the same studied, raffish charm (and probably the same décor) since the war. This is a London restaurant that doesn't take credit cards: where they don't serve coffee, and where you may end up perched on a stool at the counter. You'll find

native oysters at the top of their form here, simple, old-fashioned offerings such as mighty slabs of perfectly grilled fish, and puddings that put the nurse into nursery food. And then, in a charmingly offhand fashion, the bill slides up to your wallet and mugs it. Sweetings is a genuine anachronism—this is how every City restaurant used to be. Visit it and marvel, it will only go to emphasise just how much things are changing. **Sweetings**, 39 Queen Victoria Street, EC4 (020 7488 3069), £100-£140\*

There have always been Indian restaurants lurking among the E postcodes. In the beginning they came this way because the docks provided them with a ready-made customer base of Lascar seamen. Namaste restaurant opened on Allie Street in the late 80s and was a runaway success. Chef/proprietor Cyrus Todiwala brought sophistication and regional Indian dishes to a part of town that had hitherto mentally bracketed curry and lager as an indissoluble partnership. By the early 90s, the restaurant had moved to an old Post Office in Prescott Street, a much larger and brighter affair but still selling a unique combination of dishes—some traditional, some

Above, Prism, housed in the striking former Bank of New York building, serves sophisticated modern-British cuisine to discerning diners. Greek food gets a make-over courtesy of Paloma Campbell and Theodore Kyriakou, co-owners of The Real Greek, above right. Winner of restaurant of the year in the 2001 Meati & Chandon London Restaurant Awards, St John, above far right, serves British fare at its best and most fresh.



innovative. **Café Spice Namaste** provided the first evidence of a restaurant people were willing to journey into the City to find: a restaurant made successful by the quality of the food rather than its proximity to an office. Further proof is that it is now busy on Saturdays. Look out for good tandoor work, splendid and authentic *vindalho* de porco and Parsee dishes such as *dhansak*. **Café Spice Namaste**, 16 Prescott Street, E1 (020 7488 9242), £70-£100\*

Another eccentric but "destination" restaurant in darkest E1 is the **Arkansas Café**. It's hard to believe, but London's most authentic American barbecue food has its home in a delightfully shabby establishment in Old Spitalfields Market. You'll spot it easily because the giant steel box that is Bubba Helberg's all-American barbecue will be emitting a gentle puff of smoke every now and then. Good steaks and great ribs on the one hand, paper plates and pretty basic surrounds on the other. Bubba hops around the grills worrying away to ensure that your meal is perfect. Each year he performs this vital function at the American Ambassador's 4th July party—not a bad testimonial. **Arkansas Café**, Unit 12, Old Spitalfields Market, E1 (020 7377 6899), £40-£80\*

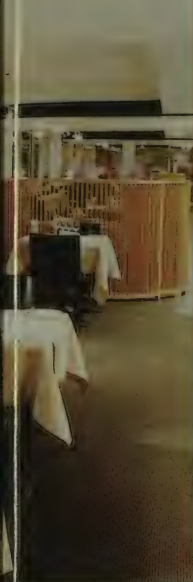
By now our odyssey through the changing City has made it squarely into the 90s. In St John Street, an architect-turned-chef called Fergus Henderson and two restaurateurs called Trevor Gulliver and John Spitter were busy turning an old smoke house into one of London's finest restaurants. Granted, the Michelin men may



not have given it a fair break, but that is understandable—after all, they're French and this is a British restaurant. And what a good British restaurant **St John** serves real food. Here, the very best, hand-picked, seasonal ingredients are treated with the respect that they deserve. Expect a perfect chop from a cosseted Gloucester Old Spot Pig, a salad of roasted marrow bones and fresh parsley or a smoked eel and potato pie before moving on to treacle sponge pudding and Jersey cream or, perhaps, a home-made Eccles cake teamed with a strong Lancashire cheese? In the last few years this establishment has started to get the recognition it deserves, and it is now racking up a fine collection of awards. **St John**, 26 St John Street, EC1 (020 7251 0848), £95-£140\*

**1 Lombard Street** was one of the next restaurants to make a significant mark on eating in the City. Soren Jessen is a City financier who had an abiding love of fine food and wine, and a burning desire to open a serious restaurant. He recruited an extremely able, Michelin-spangled chef called Herbert Berger and proceeded to set about the site at 1 Lombard Street. Today, you'll find a smart, fine-dining restaurant to the rear and a bustling brasserie in the front with a lively, circular bar. The fine-dining room provides seriously upmarket food, and even more serious wines for the local heavy hitters. The brasserie is an altogether busier and brassier place. Here, the menu stretches from a really good coq au vin to chops, steaks, game and fish, and even such simple and delightful indulgences as a soft-boiled, free-range





THE FRESHLY REVAMPED SEARCY'S RESTAURANT IS THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF HOW THINGS REALLY HAVE CHANGED IN THE CITY.

egg served with baked potato, smoked salmon and olives. Do not make the mistake of thinking that just because the service is brisk and efficient (presumably so that lords of the universe don't have to spend too long away from their desks and the pursuit of world domination) this place is not a serious restaurant. Chef Berger was once heard to say that "caviar is a brasserie dish". Quite so—there's nothing so casual and homely as a few tablespoons of Beluga, and you'll find such comfort *trains* in the menu here. 1 Lombard Street, EC4A 3DF 1999 £61.11, Brasserie £100-160, Dining Room £160-£200\*

Immediately after 1 Lombard Street had begun to make its mark, the restaurant division of Harvey Nichols (not content with a portfolio that included both the Fifth Floor restaurant and the Oxo Tower restaurant) decided that the City deserved its seal of approval. A former banking hall was converted, and **Prism** was born. Rather than resembling a prism, the dining area is more akin to the inside of a large, white cube. The high ceilings have been used to great advantage, and the whole of one side of the room is devoted to an elegant bar. The food is sophisticated modern-British, and a sensible emphasis is placed on provenance. The kitchen knows what it is doing and dishes are generally well-seasoned. The wine list must puzzle all but bankers: there are some stratospheric prices here, unless it's just that the decimal point has slipped. *Can you but hope!* Prism Restaurant and Bar, 147 Leadenhall Street, EC3 (020 7256 3888), £100-£140\*

A mere two-and-a-half years ago, Pascal Auisgnac opened **Club Gascon** on the fringes of Smithfield Market. After the critics had got over the problematic name (it wasn't a club at all) they rallied, and deluged the place with medals of all kinds. Club Gascon has been a runaway success since the day it opened. The menu is split into a number of rather archly named sections: *le route du sel*—cured meats and charcuterie; *les foies gras*; *l'océane*—fish and shellfish; and *le potager*—vegetables and cheese. And, to make matters even more complex, dishes come in "taster" sizes, so you end up with a dozen or so little plateaus. The kitchen is particularly good at the Gascon favourites, and the various foie gras dishes are epic. But all dishes entrance, whether it's a trad cassoulet *Toulousain*, a *piquerade Basquaise*; or simply *jambon fermier*. No wonder this place is so busy that booking is essential. Club Gascon, 57 West Smithfield, EC1 (020 7796 0600), £100-£140\*

The **Real Greek** opened in September 1999. The real Greek in question is a chef called Theodore Kyriakou, who had already made a name for himself as one of the founders of the original Livebait—a highly praised fish restaurant behind Waterloo. The Real Greek's *raison d'être* is to get us all to reappraise Greek cuisine, which is no mean feat when most of London's Greek menus feature mainly Greek Cypriot dishes—lurid-pink tarama to name but one! Authentic Greek dishes are very different. There are superb pastries from the part of Greece



The Don, top left, and Searcy's restaurant, top centre, are the newest additions to the City's burgeoning restaurant scene. The bustling brasserie, top right, complements the seriously upmarket fine-dining restaurant at 1 Lombard Street. Diners at the ever-popular Club Gascon, above, share "taster" sized dishes of entrancing south-west French cuisine.

near the Albanian border; fish dishes from the islands; and exotic, spicy food from the Greek minority community in western Turkey. Game, offal and rare cheeses all feature. Despite being well away from the West End, the Real Greek has proved wildly successful and has become a true "destination restaurant". The Real Greek, 15 Hoxton Market, N1 (020 7739 8212), £80-£120\*

A famous portrait of the Sandeman's Don hung in St Swithin's Lane for many years when, in the 60s, it was removed to Sandeman's Spanish premises. In late 2000, the Sandeman's cellars were converted to form a new restaurant, **The Don**, and the portrait was returned to take pride of place on the street outside. Downstairs in the brick-vaulted cellars there is a bistro, and upstairs a pukka restaurant. The dining room is elegant and modern, with a wood floor so real that it squeaks. Service is attentive, and the kitchen is particularly good at charcuterie and terrines. The cuisine has its foundations in classical French cooking but is broadly modern-European—anything from hot smoked salmon to loin of New Zealand venison with garlic *pommes purée*, honey-roast parsnips and a shallot sauce. It is good to see a restaurant that offers a savoury, in this case Rebluchon cheese on toast. Could this be a *lapin Français*? The Don, 20 St Swithin's Lane, EC4 (020 7626 2606), £120-£180\*


One of the newest City establishments to set its cap at "destination restaurant" status is the freshly revamped and restyled **Searcy's** at the Barbican. Reopened in the

spring of 2001, it is set to make waves. Although the décor has not changed radically, the dining room seems somehow lighter and less fussy. The new man at the stoves is Chris McGowan, and the food is very good indeed. Post-relaunch the restaurant has become more expensive, but strangely enough somewhat less formal. Starters such as terrine of foie gras pressed with gingerbread work much better on the plate than you might imagine when reading the menu, while roast scallops with crispy pork and carrots presents an array of subtly different flavours coupled with a range of textures. Main courses range from a splendid pig's trotter stuffed with black pudding, served simply with excellent jus and some good mash, to roast red mullet with ratatouille and corn/it potatoes. Dishes are very well presented. What's more, there is a competitively priced table d'hôte menu offering two courses at lunch for under £20. This place is one to watch, and the perfect example of how things have changed in the City. Searcy's, Level 2, The Barbican Centre, Silk Street, EC2 (020 7583 3008), £120-£180\*

\*all prices represent an approximate guide to a full meal for two people, including wine.

**CHARLES CAMPION** is a Glenfiddich Restaurant Writer of the Year award winner who writes *The Rough Guide to London Restaurants* and about food for *ES*—the magazine for London's Evening Standard.





# Summer sparkle

Fiona Beckett suggests the perfect champagnes—and places to sip them—to add fizz to your summer celebrations.



**YOU COULD** be lying on the grass by a riverbank, idly watching the world drift by, or celebrating your company's latest business coup; you may be picnicking in style at Glyndebourne, or desperately struggling to suppress that lump in your throat as you toast the happiness of your best friend at her wedding—all are classic summer occasions for which the most appropriate, gloriously indulgent drink is champagne. There are few occasions when we would refuse a glass of bubbly, but how much thought do we give to its nuances of taste? Given that it costs two to three times what we normally pay for a bottle of wine—in some instances considerably more—this seems a rather careless attitude to adopt.

My own view is that there are some champagnes that are much more suited to summer than others, though few champagne houses go as far as Pommery, which brings out a special summertime cuvée. While, in winter, I may appreciate the robust quality of a blanc de noirs (champagne made purely from black grapes), or look to a vintage champagne to match rare game such as pigeon (fantastic with vintage rosé), in summer I want fresher-tasting fizz. Some champagne houses naturally make their wines in this style. Non-vintage Taittinger, for example, is always light and fresh, though not so delicate that it can't be drunk with robust food. I remember in Reims drinking a glass with a plate of outrageously garlicky escargots, and it stood up magnificently. But, for choice, I'd have it with a light, summer brunch.

Another great warm-weather champagne is Pol Roger's White Foil (whose eponymous colour scheme somehow makes it even look summery). Pol Roger was Sir Winston Churchill's favourite marque, a fact the company commemorates with a prestige Cuvée Sir Winston Churchill, which is a gloriously opulent champagne. (Churchill's famous dictum regarding champagne was: "In victory, we deserve it. In defeat, we need it.") If you're treating yourself to a feast of fresh lobster, this is the wine to drink.

Laurent-Perrier champagne is also made in a lighter style. In fact, it produces one bottling called Ultra Brut that has no dosage (added sweetness) at all. This is in contrast to most champagnes, which have a wine and sugar solution added to counteract excessive acidity when they are young. I was once challenged to create a multi-course meal with Michel Roux at Le Gavroche that could be accompanied by Ultra Brut from starter to dessert. Michel came up with an inspired menu and the meal was a revelation. We found Ultra Brut went with the most unlikely ingredients, including cucumber, rhubarb and sauerkraut!

To my mind, the style of champagne that is best suited to summer is blanc de blancs (made only from Chardonnay). Even supermarkets such as Sainsbury's and Waitrose now have their own-label versions, which makes it affordable for

a weekend breakfast or brunch—blanc de blancs is divine with smoked salmon and scrambled eggs, or with eggs Benedict. Don't expect the rich, tropical fruit flavours of a New World Chardonnay—blanc de blancs has all the delicious creaminess of (though the Champenois may kill me for saying this) an ice-cream soda. This makes it supremely easy to drink on its own, or with a few smoked-salmon nibbles.

For a special summer dinner party, vintage blanc de blancs is a wonderful wine to serve, particularly with wild salmon and fresh, seasonal seafood such as crab, langoustines and lobster. Two lesser-known names to look out for are Deutz and Jacquesson and, again, the Pol Roger 1993 Brut Chardonnay is very good. If you're really pushing the boat out, however, Taittinger's luxurious Comtes de Champagne is excellent.

A different style of champagne that's particularly summery is rosé, which is generally made—unlike rosé wines, which are made only from black grapes—by adding a little red wine to the base wine before it is fermented in the bottle. Rosé makes a superb warm-weather tipple. My favourite is Billecart-Salmon, which is stocked by many of the smartest champagne bars. It has a wonderfully delicate strawberry flavour and is, temptingly, available in halves. Laurent-Perrier's Cuvée Rosé Brut is also delicious and, like the Billecart-Salmon, comes in a particularly pretty bottle.

Drink rosé champagne with any of the Mediterranean dishes you would partner with a dry rosé wine. It is also delicious with cold lamb cutlets and finely carved, rare roast beef—and with certain summer fruits. "Strawberries coupled with rosé champagne is a real treat," says James Taylor, wine buyer for Fortnum & Mason. "It encompasses everything that's great about our British summers."

Champagne, of course, can also be sweet (though as is often the case with the region's rather obscure labelling laws, it is described as demi sec—half dry). It goes wonderfully well with poached peaches, light, creamy confections made with strawberries or raspberries, fruit tarts and fruit jellies. "If you want to be really stylish you can decant your sweet champagne, as was the fashion in the





Above, top to bottom: contemporary drinking at the bar at Mandarin Oriental; connoisseurs can choose from an impressive range of vintages at Claridge's Bar; at over 18m above ground level, the UK's highest bar, Vertigo, offers unrivalled panoramic views across the City. Above right, basking by the river—one of the classic summer occasions when only champagne will do.

## Bars with fizz

**CLARIDGE'S BAR** Claridge's Hotel, Brook Street, W1 (020 7629 8860). Mid-afternoon you'll find the bar full of suits having meetings—when they're not dipping into the impressive selection of library vintages. Clubby, but stylish, retro décor and a smart selection of snacks. **CORNEY & BARROW** 116 St Martin's Lane, WC2 (020 7655 9800). The wine bar reinvented for the 21st century. Ideal for that pre-theatre glass of fizz or any other wine you fancy. Plenty of branches in the City too.

**FORTNUM & MASON** 181 Piccadilly, W1 (020 7734 9040). There's something deliciously old-fashioned about Fortnum & Mason's salmon and champagne bar. Pop in for lunch and have a salmon or caviar duo, or drink a glass of bubbly with your afternoon tea.

**LONG BAR** Sanderson Hotel, 50 Berners Street, W1 (020 7300 9500). This is still hugely hip, plus it has an outdoor, Japanese-style courtyard that is the perfect venue for a summer drink.

**THE MANDARIN** Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, SW1 (020 7235 2000). The recently reopened bar at the Mandarin Oriental is brilliantly stylish and superbly situated—the ideal place to recuperate after a shopping spree at Harvey Nichols opposite.

**VERTIGO** Tower 42, Old Broad Street, EC2 (020 7677 7842). The truly awesome view—the best in London—makes the hassle of getting in worthwhile. You need to book, and even then it's still a challenge getting past the security.

19th century," says John West, managing director of Veuve Clicquot. "It's not widely known that champagne benefits from being aerated. However, unlike red wine, which is decanted a couple of hours ahead, champagne should be drunk immediately."

There's also a style of fizz known as rich champagne that works equally well with savoury dishes, such as foie gras, as it does with fresh-fruit desserts. Veuve Clicquot, for instance, produces a Rich Réserve that is particularly good with Pacific Rim or fusion dishes that include ginger or chilli. Incidentally, I've discovered that Veuve Clicquot's non-vintage Yellow Label is an excellent match for mildly spiced Indian food, particularly seafood, as is any full-flavoured, non-vintage fizz.

Although vintage champagne is, on the whole, a style I turn to for autumn and winter drinking, vintages vary. The year 1990, for example, was very rich, while 1993 was considerably lighter. What counts in the summer is freshness: this is not the time for older, richer vintages. I'm often asked what to drink for big occasions

such as summer weddings. The cardinal rule is to try different champagnes—whether it's a demon deal from a warehouse in Calais or a hotel's house champagne—to check that you actually like it. "It might sound like heresy, but it's much better to drink a good sparkling wine rather than a less-appealing champagne, saving a really good bottle for the toast," says Justin Llewelyn of Taittinger. Llewelyn is also a big fan of rosé for summer weddings: "There is something rather decadent about it—people just love it."

Such occasions call for independent wine merchants. Most can suggest carefully chosen growers' champagnes that are a product of a defined area, rather than a blend of grapes from different regions—as is the case with the big brands. An example is Tanners (01743 234455; [www.tanners-wines.co.uk](http://www.tanners-wines.co.uk)), whose champagne, Michel Arnaud Brut Réserve (£13.60), is cheaper than many supermarket bottles. "They are much better value than the big names because you're not paying for a large marketing budget," explains managing director James

Tanner. "Well-known champagnes are very good, but you do pay for the kudos of drinking them."

To fully appreciate champagne, don't drink it too young—almost all champagne benefits from being kept for six months to a year—and note that it will stay fresher for longer in a magnum. But, perhaps, the main thing to remember is to serve champagne sufficiently chilled. For speed, plunge the bottle into a bucket of iced water, which works faster than ice alone. An individual bottle can always be popped in the freezer for 15 minutes, though don't, for goodness sake, forget it's there.

And glasses? Strictly, they should be tall flutes, which trap the bubbles more effectively than the old-fashioned saucer shape. It has to be said, however, that if I was on a river bank and someone offered me champagne in a tumbler, I wouldn't refuse. It is summer after all.

**FIONA BECKETT** is the author of four wine books, and is consultant editor to *Decanter Magazine* and its website. She also writes a food column for *The Times*.



## Prices & stockists

Most of these wines are widely available, so it's just a question of looking for the best deal. A good starting point is Oddbins or Majestic. Well-known marques can usually be found in department stores such as Fortnum & Mason, Harrods and Selfridges. Undiscounted retail prices are as follows: Billecart-Salmon Rosé, £29.99; Deutz Blanc de Blancs 1995, £38.99, virginwines.com, Berkman Wine Cellars (020 7609 4711); Dom Pérignon 1993, £65; Jacquesson Blanc de Blancs 1995, £39.99, Mayfair Cellars (020 7320 8899) and Selfridges; Laurent-Perrier Brut, £22.99; Laurent-Perrier Rosé, £30.99; Laurent-Perrier Ultra Brut, £29.99; Pol Roger Brut Chardonnay 1993, £45, La Réserve (020 7589 2020); Pol Roger Cuvée Sir Winston Churchill 1990, £75; Pol Roger White Foil, £24; Pommery Summer Time, £25.99; Taittinger Brut, £24.99; Taittinger Comtes de Champagne 1993, £79.99; Veuve Clicquot Brut Yellow Label, £25.49; Veuve Clicquot Rich Réserve 1995, £35.99.



from stage to screen, galleries to concert halls—starting with what’s hot in the City

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**City of London Festival** The festival, featuring music, theatre, visual art & City walks, once again offers the

**Luthfansa Festival of Baroque Music**  
This year's festival opens & closes in Westminster Abbey with the St James' Baroque Players performing Bach, Handel & Purcell. Other appearances include the Purcell Quartet; Gabrieli Consort & Players (Monteverdi & his contemporaries); Ensemble Orpnum (sacred music from Corsica); I Fagiolini (Venetian carnival music); & the Russian Patriarchate Choir (sacred music from ancient Russia). May/23: June 28. *Most performances take place at St John's Smith Square. Box office: St John's Smith Sq, London SW1 (020 7222 1061).*

**Spitalfields Festival** Old Spitalfields Market joins Hawksmoor's Christ Church as another venue this year. Concerts include Stephen Cleobury leading His Majesty's Sagabuts & Cornetts & the BBC Singers in psalm settings; by Schutz, Gabrieli & Monteverdi; & Venetian ensemble La Serenissima marking the 250th anniversary of Albioni's death. Other artists include soprano Catherine Bott, the Dante Quartet, the Britten Sinfonia & baroque orchestra The Parley of Instruments. June 4-22. Box office: 75 Brushfield Street, London, E1 (020 7337 1362).

## BARRICAN HALL

**Randy Weston** The imposing pianist offers African-infused jazz. May 18.

**Gerald Finzi** Richard Hickox, a great champion of English music.

City style, ancient and modern: Yeoman Warders at the Tower of London, below, were given their distinctive garb by Wellington—The Iron Duke—whose influence on the former fortress is explored in a special exhibition. Bottom left, the urban art and culture of London and Tokyo are examined at the Barbican's JAM #2.001 show.

**celebrates the 100th anniversary of**  
Finzi's birth with the London Symphony  
Orchestra & Chorus. May 20.  
**Abdullah Ibrahim** The South African  
saxophonist is joined by the NDR Big  
Band. May 24.  
**BBC Symphony Orchestra** Jukka-  
Pekka Saraste conducts Bartok,  
Salonen, Sibelius & a new piece by  
Franco Donatoni. May 26.

**BANK OF ENGLAND MUSEUM**  
Bartholomew Lane, EC2 (020 7601 5545)  
**Forgery: The Artful Crime** Three centuries of unlawful efforts to counterfeit Bank of England notes & examples of the Bank's attempts to prevent them. Until Oct 10. Mon-Fri 10am-5pm. Closed May 28.  
[www.bankofengland.co.uk](http://www.bankofengland.co.uk)



**JAM #2.001: London-Tokyo**  
A celebration of artistic & design innovation, looking at the parallels between fashion designers, photographers, graphic artists, musicians & other style-setters in both capital cities. Until July 8  
**Helmut Newton** Photographs—about 200 images in all—by the German-born photographer who depicted women for the pages of French Vogue in striking, often controversial settings. Until July 8  
Mon-Sat 10am-6pm (Wed until 8pm); Sun noon-6pm, [www.barbican.org.uk](http://www.barbican.org.uk)  
**GLADWELL & CO**  
68 Queen Victoria Street, EC4  
(020) 7248 3824)

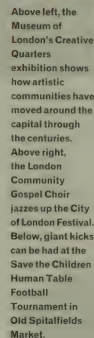
**London Yesterday & Today** Views of the capital, in watercolours & etchings, covering the last 150 years. May 29-June 8, Mon-Fri 9.30am-6pm

**GUILDHALL ART GALLERY**  
Guildhall Yard, EC2 (020 7332 3700).

**Sheriffs' Chains & Badges** A display of insignia worn by the holders of the City's oldest continuing office, who still perform duties at every session of the Central Criminal Courts & attend the Lord Mayor during official functions. Designed & crafted by goldsmiths for each sheriff since the 17th century.

these items will be shown alongside other artefacts to tell the history of this ancient post. June 25-July 29. Mon-Sat 10am-5pm; Sun noon-4pm. [www.corpoflondon.gov.uk](http://www.corpoflondon.gov.uk). **MUSEUM OF LONDON** London Wall, EC2 (020 7600 3600)

**Creative Quarters: The Art World in London 1700-2000**  
A look at how artists settled in different districts—from 18th-century Covent Garden, through Hammersmith,



Chelsea & Soho, to today's flourishing East End—causing associated trade industries & institutions to spring up alongside. The exhibition includes work by Reynolds, Constable, Whistler, Blake, Rossetti, Sickert, Freud, Averbach & Bacon. Until July 15. *Mon-Sat 10am-5.50pm, Sun noon-5.50pm*  
[www.museumoflondon.org.uk](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk)

## MYTHS AND MONSTERS

**WELLINGTON—THE IRON DUKE** Special exhibition examining the career of the Duke—hero of Waterloo—who, during his time as Constable of the Tower, did much to transform the former fortress by draining the moat, giving its Yeoman Warders their distinctive uniforms & moving the

monarch's menagerie to Regent  
Park. Associated events, which run  
from 10am-3pm, include mini-pageants  
each day, recreating preparations by  
Wellington's Redcoats for the  
Peninsular War of 1812. May 26-June 3  
Mon-Sat 9am-6pm; Sun 10am-6pm  
Tower of London, EC3 (020 7709 0765)  
[www.hrp.org.uk](http://www.hrp.org.uk)

## PEPYS COMMEMORATION

HUMAN TABLE FOOTBALL  
TOURNAMENT



## theatre

**Summertime & the theatregoing is alfresco once again at Shakespeare's Globe and the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park. Indoors, stage mavericks Peter Brook & Robert Lepage are bound to surprise with new work, and an acclaimed Martine McCutcheon hits the West End in *My Fair Lady*.**

*Aspen, a 1999 production by the Open Air Theatre, Regent's Park*

**BLUE/ORANGE** It's great to find a play that can provoke & entertain in equal measure. Joe Penhall's award-winning new play is a brilliant mix of madness & race through the clash of two cultures. Consultant (Bill) is a brilliant consultant (Andrew Lincoln) over the best treatment for a man (Oscar) with possible schizophrenia. Excellent performances, directed by Roger Michell. *Drama, Catherine St, WC2 (020 7494 5000)*

**CLOSER TO HEAVEN** Having always put on highly theatrical concerts, the Pulp Boys now attempt their first play. The play is a tale about a glamorous young Irish lad who escapes to London & falls foul of the decadent delights of the capital's club scene. Playwright Jonathan Harvey, best known for the feel-good coming-out musical *Boys in the Trees*, brings his blend of wit, wit & wit to the script, while Pulp Boys heads the cast. Opens May 30. *Arts Theatre, Great Newport St, WC1 (020 7836 3334)*

**THE FAR SIDE OF THE MOON** Canadian stage wizard Robert Lepage combines multi-media, puppetry & a brilliant cast of actors. It's an exploration of the journey to the moon, filtered through the imagination of a 12-year-old boy. Opens July 6. *Lytelton, National Theatre, South Bank, SE1 (020 7452 3000)*

**FEELGOOD** Who knows if this satire of Blairite politics will affect your vote come the General

Election, but it may well put a smile on your face. A star of the political spin, a transfer from Hampstead Theatre, features a tremendous Henry Goodman as a Mandelsonian baddie & Nigel Planer as a gormless peer, whose bunglings threaten to lose the New Labour the election. *Garrick, Charing Cross Rd, WC2 (020 7494 5085)*

**THE FEMALE ODD COUPLE** Neil Simon's 60s comedy about two divorced husbands who set up home together gets a sex change, with placid slob Oscar & fussy Felix (parts that Walter Matthau & Jack Lemmon made their own in the film version) now becoming Olive & Florence. Paula Wilcox & Jenny Seagrove do battle as the chalk-&-cheese housemates in a barrage of one-liners. *Apollo, Shaftesbury Ave, W1 (020 7494 5070)*

**KING LEAR** The new repertory season at Shakespeare's Globe is under way with Julian Glover as the heath-bound monarch & John McNery as his fool in Barry Kyle's production (until Sept 21).



**Dream summer:** Regent's Park Open Air Theatre returns with its popular *Midsummer Night's Dream*, above. Pop star Martine McCutcheon, below, does a luvverly turn as Eliza Dolittle.

Jasper Britton & Eve Best play the murderous couple in Tim Carroll's staging of *Macbeth* (May 27-Sept 22) & Mike Alfreds directs Mark Rylance in the title role of *Cymbeline* (June 30-Sept 23). And, for curiosity value, there is a Japanese company's version of *The Comedy of Errors* (July 18-22). *Shakespeare's Globe, Bankside, SE1 (020 7401 9919)*

**LOVE SUICIDES AT SONESAKI** Chikamatsu-za, one of Japan's leading kabuki companies, presents a double bill: *Love Suicides at Sonesaki*, considered one of the greatest works in the kabuki canon, is prefaced by *Fishing for a Wife*, a comedic dance piece. Performed in Japanese (with English translation provided). May 30-June 9. *Sadler's Wells, Rosebery Ave, EC1 (020 7863 8000)*

**A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM** A favourite Shakespeare for the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park returns with last year's crystal-clear production by Alan Strachan, featuring Gary Wilmot as Bottom & Paul Kemp returning as an excellent, sardonic Puck (in repertory from June 4). It's joined by Rachel Kavanaugh's staging of *Love's Labour's Lost* (from June 6), a rare London outing for *Where's Charley?*, Frank Loesser's musical adaptation of *Charley's Aunt* (from July 24), the children's show *Pinocchio in the Park* (from Aug 1) & Joseph Papp's ever-popular, souped-up version of *The Pirates of Penzance* (from Aug 27). *Open Air Theatre, Regent's Park, NW1 (020 7486 2431)*

**MOUNTAIN LANGUAGE/ASHES TO ASHES** Harold Pinter's obsessions with power & oppression are explored in this double bill of revivals. *Mountain*





*Language* (1988) shows how language can be used to suppress & manipulate people, while the elliptical, poetic *Ashes to Ashes* (1996) explores the connections between sexual & political fascism. Katie Mitchell directs a strong cast that includes Anastasia Hille & Gabrielle Hamilton. Opens June 26. *Royal Court, Sloane Sq, SW1* (020 7565 5000).

**MOUTH TO MOUTH** Kevin Elyot's moving follow-up to his West End hit *My Night with Reg* is a tragi-comedy of sexual intimacy, betrayal & loss. Told in flashback, it unravels the stories of a bunch of hopelessly self-absorbed Londoners through the ultimately tragic homecoming of a passionate mother's teenage son. First seen at the Royal Court, Ian Rickson's sensitive production boasts a fine cast, including



an ice-cool & never-better Lindsay Duncan as the mother & Michael Maloney as her HIV-stricken playwright friend. Opens May 16. *Albery, St Martin's Lane, WC2* (020 7369 1740).

**MY FAIR LADY** This transfer, from the National, of Trevor Nunn's sharp revival of the Lerner & Loewe classic finds Martine McCutcheon in strong voice as made-over Cockney flowergirl Eliza & Jonathan Pryce as a touchingly tetchy & comically smug Henry Higgins. There's also eloquent choreography by Matthew Bourne (the Ascot scene is a treat) &, of course, some of the wittiest & most enjoyable songs that the musical theatre has ever produced. Opens July 21. *Drury Lane Theatre Royal, Catherine St, WC2* (020 7494 5000).

**THE SHAPE OF THINGS** Neal LaBute, who made his name with dark & striking screen comedies, returns to his theatrical roots by directing the world premiere of his latest play, which explores the conflict of art & love through two relationships. Rachel Weisz stars. Opens May 30. *Almeida at King's Cross, Omega Place, off Caledonian Rd, N1* (020 7359 4404).

**THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET** In this pared-down version of Shakespeare's Peter Brook, first seen in Paris, a marvellous, multi-ethnic cast of eight works so hard that you can almost hear Adrian Lester's wry voice. Peter Brook plays all the absent guard, the king, & ambassadors. *Arts Council Theatre, 100, The Courtyard, SE10 1JF*.



**Politically correct?** Henry Goodman gives a wonderful performance in *Feelgood*, top, a satire on the Blairite government. Chikamatsu-za, a leading kabuki company, brings Japanese theatre to the Barbican in *Love Suicides at Soneskai*, left.

## MAKING LIMELIGHT WORK

While some of our leading theatre directors, including Sam Mendes and Stephen Daldry, are busy pursuing cinema glory, stars of the big and small screen are jostling to prove that they can hold their own on the London stage. Currently, ex-*Big Breakfast* presenter Denise van Outen is hotfooting it in *Chicago*, and Hollywood veteran George Segal is arguing over a minimalist painting in *Art*. Ex-*EastEnders* Martine McCutcheon hits the West End in *My Fair Lady*, and Glenn Close and Nicole Kidman are signed up for future productions at the National.

Casting screen celebrities—and if possible persuading them to take their clothes off, which did wonders for the pre-box office bookings of *The Graduate* with Kathleen Turner—seems to be the current tactic for wooing tourists or attracting audiences who don't normally go to the theatre.

Sean Connery is one of the producers behind the long-running *Art*. Kevin Spacey is involved with the newly formed Old Vic Productions, which is developing West End projects. And Britpack stars Jude Law and Ewan McGregor (pictured) have used their big-screen celebrity clout to set up Natural Nylon Theatre, which plans productions of *Dr Faustus*, *Three Sisters* and an adaptation of John Fowles' *The Collector*.

All these star turns suggest that London's West End is buoyant at the moment. But success at the glitzy end of the market conceals the difficulties that



less glamorous theatres are facing. Most of the country's main regional theatres are technically insolvent, despite the subsidies they receive. Many have been forced to put up ticket prices, which is one reason why audiences are falling, and small theatres are closing.

Ian Rickson, artistic director of the Royal Court, points out that the tourist-magnet West End theatres depend on the impoverished regional ones to nurture and supply actors, directors and writers. The Arts Council is encouraging regional venues to find new audiences, but while Denise struts her stuff in *Chicago*, they've got tough competition.

IAN JOHNS



## dance

**Kirov Ballet returns for a summer season, English National Ballet thinks big with an arena *Romeo & Juliet*, Rambert celebrates its 75th anniversary & Sylvie Guillem dances her own *Manon* for La Scala Opera Ballet.**

**ENGLISH NATIONAL BALLET** A 125-strong company performs Derek Deane's arena staging of *Romeo & Juliet*. Agnes Oaks & Thomas Edur take the title roles on opening night (& June 21 & 23). Brazilian ballerina Fernanda Oliveira also plays Juliet, with Australian Nathan Coppen as her Romeo. June 13-23. *Albert Hall, Kensington Gore, SW7* (020 7586 8212)

**KIROV BALLET** The celebrated company returns with last year's productions of Balanchine's *Jewels*.

the Fokine bill & the restored *Sleeping Beauty*. New to London will be the Kirov's account of MacMillan's *Manon* & revised productions of *Le Corsaire* & *La Bayadère*. Some of the Kirov's greatest stars, including Altyнай Asylmuratova, Uliana Lopatkina & Igor Zelensky, are expected to appear. June 11-July 7. *Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, WC2* (020 7304 4000).

**ROYAL BALLET** The company's summer season revives two favourites. *Coppelia* & *Swan Lake*, as well as *The Dream*, *A Month in the Country*, *Thais* & the *pas de deux* from *The Sleeping Beauty* & *Don Quixote*. July 23-Aug 4. *Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, WC2* (020 7304 4000).

**LA SCALA OPERA BALLET** For its first-ever visit to London, the company from Milan presents Sylvie Guillem in her own production of *Giselle*. Aug 6-11. *Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, WC2* (020 7304 4000).

**Dance hits the big time with English National Ballet's arena staging of Derek Deane's *Romeo & Juliet*.**



### STILL ONE STEP AHEAD

Rambert Dance Company, Britain's longest-established troupe, proves that it is 75 years young in June with an anniversary programme at Sadler's Wells that shows it has lost none of the inspiration and passion with which its founder, Marie Rambert, enthusiastically imbued her dancers during her remarkable life. The ability of the company to respond to new ideas and constantly rejuvenate itself has established it as a leading force in international dance.

For its first 40 years, the troupe was noted as much for discovering choreographers, such as Frederick Ashton and Anthony Tudor, as for its dancing. In 1966, the company reinvented itself as a modern-dance ensemble, particularly under director Richard Alston, a devotee of Merce Cunningham and the more abstract avenues of modern dance. His 10-year reign saw the company earn critical acclaim but diminishing audiences. Rambert's fortunes began to turn around when its current director, Christopher Bruce, took over in 1994. Bruce had trained and performed with Rambert in the 60s and went on to establish a reputation for lyrical and theatrical choreography throughout Europe. He broadened Rambert's scope by increasing the number of dancers and widening the range of choreographers presented.

The 75th anniversary programme will acknowledge Rambert's illustrious past, including such hallmarks as Glen Tetley's *Pierrot Lunaire*, left, and pieces by former resident choreographer Siobhan Davies.

But it will also look to the future, with new works by Alston himself and Wayne McGregor.

Bruce is keen to develop new choreographic talent from within the company. "It doesn't arrive overnight, however," he says. "Art is an ongoing, living thing. It's never the same from night to night—that's its magic. The mystery of it all is something you can never fully understand, but that's why people keep coming to the theatre." *Rambert Anniversary Programme, June 12-23, Sadler's Wells, Rosebery Ave, EC1* (020 7863 8000).

IAN JOHNS

**The Kirov Ballet makes a welcome return to Covent Garden with works old and new, including MacMillan's *Manon*.**





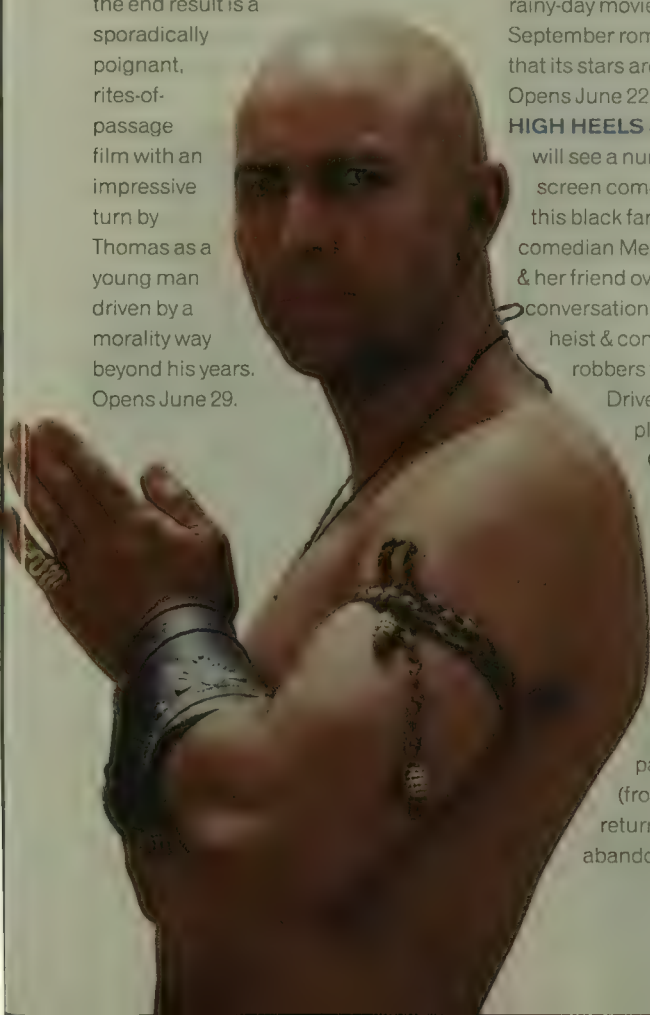


Prepare to weep buckets at Richard Gere and Winona Ryder's ill-fated romance in *Autumn in New York*, below, and unrequited love in the midst of war-torn *Pearl Harbor*, left.

## Cinema

**Jurassic Park III** is a would-be monster hit in a sequel-heavy summer, although *Pearl Harbor* aims to be top gun among the blockbusters. British comedy *High Heels & Low Lives* hopes to raise some smiles & *All the Pretty Horses* & *Autumn in New York* to shed a few tears.

**ALL THE PRETTY HORSES** Reports of battles between the studio & director Billy Bob Thornton suggested that this adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's lauded Western novel—about two young drifters (Matt Damon & Henry Thomas) in Mexico who fall for the same woman (Penélope Cruz)—would be an indulgent mess. Although it fails to capture the book's poetic grandeur, the end result is a sporadically poignant, rites-of-passage film with an impressive turn by Thomas as a young man driven by a morality way beyond his years. Opens June 29.



**AUTUMN IN NEW YORK** This old-fashioned tear-jerker tries to give *Love Story* a twist by having a middle-aged man (Richard Gere's womanising restaurateur) fall for a much younger free spirit with a terminal disease (Winona Ryder's adventure-seeking 21-year-old). Entertaining enough as a rainy-day movie, even though this May-September romance fudges the reality that its stars are really June-August. Opens June 22.

**HIGH HEELS & LOW LIVES** This year will see a number of British big-screen comedies, first of which is this black farce, directed by actor & comedian Mel Smith, in which a nurse & her friend overhear a phone conversation that describes a bank heist & conspire to blackmail the robbers for \$2 million. Minnie Driver & Mary McCormack play the two-timing duo. Opens July 20.

**JURASSIC PARK III** Still hoping that dinosaurs aren't extinct at the box office, Steven Spielberg has supplied the story idea for this second sequel, in which palaeontologist Sam Neill (from the original film) returns to the now abandoned tropical island

Mummy's boys: Arnold Vosloo reprises his role as Im-Ho-Tep, aka *The Mummy*, in the sequel to the 1999 blockbuster, below left, while young Roland Bozz (Colin Farrell) and his fellow recruits find themselves badly equipped to deal with the prospect of war in Vietnam, in *Tigerland*, below.

dinosaur theme park to lead the search for a crash-landed plane. Ten dino species will be trying to dine on the cast, which includes William H Macy & Tea Leoni. Opens July 20.

**THE MUMMY RETURNS** It's now 10 years since legionnaire Brendan Fraser & archaeologist Rachel Weisz battled a resurrected Egyptian priest in 1999's surprise hit *The Mummy*. Now married & with a child, the couple once again face the bandaged baddie, as well as his evil mistress & a new fierce warrior, the Scorpion King. With \$20 million worth of special effects, expect even more mummified mayhem mixed with hokey humour. Opens May 18.

**PEARL HARBOR** This \$140 million recreation of Japan's devastating attack on the US fleet in Hawaii in 1941 has already been dubbed "Titanic with bombs", as its central story concerns two fighter pilots (Ben Affleck & Josh Hartnett) who fall in love with the same nurse (Kate Beckinsale). Subtlety may be the first casualty of this war movie, as it's made by action extravaganza producer Jerry Bruckheimer & director Michael (Armageddon) Bay, but it will look spectacular. Opens June 1.

**TIGERLAND** Irish actor Colin Farrell was best known for a supporting role in the TV series *Ballykissangel* until this film made him a hot property in Hollywood. Director Joel Schumacher turns his back on the bombastic *Batman* movies for this intimate, Vietnam War drama, in which Farrell plays a soldier who profoundly touches the lives of his fellow recruits. An old-fashioned, but affecting, anti-war movie. Opens May 18.





## music

This year's Proms explores themes of pastoral & exile & features Verdi, Schoenberg & Gerald Finzi. The Wigmore Hall celebrates its centenary, Jessye Norman & Luciano Pavarotti make rare UK appearances & Welsh sex bomb Tom Jones shows he's still young at heart.

### ALBERT HALL

Kensington Gore, SW7 (020 7589 8212).

**BBC Promenade Concerts**, July 20-Sept 15. Highlights include.

#### **BBC Symphony Orchestra & Chorus**

Leonard Slatkin conducts the world première of Colin Matthews' *Fanfare*, the overture to Britten's *Paul Bunyan*, Vaughan Williams & Elgar. July 20



**BBC Philharmonic Orchestra** Rimsky Korsakov, Strauss & James MacMillan conducting his new work *Birds of Rhiannon*. July 26.

#### **BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra**

Berlioz, Britten, Strauss & the première of Stuart Macrae's Violin Concerto (soloist Tasmin Little) under Martyn Brabbins. July 31.

**BBC Philharmonic** Yan Pascal Tortelier conducts Varese, Ravel, Bernstein's *Serenade* (violinist Joshua Bell) & UK première of his *West Side Story* suite. Aug 3.

**Jools Holland** The versatile pianist leads his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra & guests Julian Joseph & his Acoustic Trio in this 10pm Prom. Aug 3.

#### **BBC Philharmonic, Bach Choir & Waynflete Singers**

Holst's *Planets* under Yan Pascal Tortelier, & the world première of John Tavener's *Song of the Cosmos*, conducted by David Hill. Aug 4.

**BBC Concert Orchestra** Veteran movie composer Elmer Bernstein conducts a selection of scores by composing exiles in Hollywood. Aug 14.



**Clockwise from top left: Pavarotti sings alfresco in Hyde Park; Ravi's daughter Anoushka Shankar struts her sitar, and Philip Glass & Foday Musa Suso join forces for Genet's *The Screens* at the Royal Festival Hall; Jools Holland leads his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra for a special 10pm Prom at the Royal Albert Hall.**

**Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment & Glyndebourne Chorus** Simon Rattle conducts a semi-staged production of Beethoven's *Fidelio* (sung in German) with soprano Charlotte Margiono as Leonore & tenor Kim Begley as Florestan. Aug 16.

**Kirov Orchestra** Wagner, Schoenberg & Scriabin conducted by Valery Gergiev. Aug 28.

**Britten Sinfonia** Lambert, Britten & Finzi, with tenor Ian Bostridge. Aug 29.

**BBC Symphony Orchestra** John Adams conducts the London première of his *Naïve & Sentimental Music*, Ravel & Satie, with soprano Felicity Lott. Sept 6.  
**BBC Symphony Orchestra, Singers & Chorus** Leonard Slatkin conducts the traditional last night, which includes Verdi, Finzi, Ravel, John Adams & Sondheim, as well as the usual flag-waving favourites. Sept 15.  
*Full details of the 73 concerts are in the 2001 Proms Guide, on sale now.*

## OCEAN: A NEW WAVE MUSIC CENTRE

After a spate of embarrassingly bungled national projects, the new £23 million Ocean Music Centre in Hackney is fresh and optimistic. A 2,700-capacity venue that is hosting everything from bhangra to blues, classical to country and rock to reggae, it is a far cry from the cramped, sticky bars, jet-black auditoria and dubious toilets that hardened gig-goers usually put up with. This former Methodist Hall, opposite Hackney Town Hall, now incorporates three separate performance spaces, several bars and Aqua, a street-level café. "We needed to create a space that could comfortably house the contrasting events on show at Ocean," says designer Peter Mance who has adopted vibrant colour schemes



to help people navigate their way around.

Hopefully Ocean, which has already attracted such diverse artists as Evelyn Glennie, Fun Lovin' Criminals, Nitin Sawhney and, er, Hear'Say, won't simply become a hangout for north-east London but a music venue for the whole capital.

IAN JOHNS





**HYDE PARK**

Booking: 0870 735 5000.

**Luciano Pavarotti** Opera's big man offers alfresco arias. July 14.

**Andrea Bocelli** The popular tenor in his first UK solo appearance. July 21.

**Tom Jones** The pop veteran continues to refresh his career. July 26.

**Sting** The singer is joined by Jeff Beck & Nitin Sawhney. July 28-29.

**ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL**

South Bank Centre, SE1 (020 7960 4242).

**Anoushka Shankar** Ravi Shankar's talented daughter makes her London solo debut. May 31.

**Philip Glass & Foday Musa Suso** The composer & kora player perform their score for a stage production of Genet's *The Screens*. June 1.

**John Williams & Friends** The guitarist leads his selection of African & African-inspired pieces. June 7.

**African Jazz Explosion All Stars** The dynamic 20-piece band led by trumpeter Claude Deppa. June 8.

**Roy Ayers** The jazz veteran performs with his orchestra. July 21.

**WIGMORE HALL**

36 Wigmore St, W1 (020 7935 2141).

**Centenary Gala** Marking the 100th anniversary of the Hall, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe plays Haydn, Mozart & Schubert under Andras Schiff (May 31). Pianist Graham Johnson has also devised an evening with soprano Barbara Bonney, tenor Anthony Rolfe Johnson, counter-tenor Andreas Scholl & baritone Matthias Goerne (June 1).

**Jessye Norman** The magnificent soprano makes a rare appearance singing Schubert's *Winterreise*. July 13 & 14.

## opera

**The Kirov Opera presents a rare Rimsky-Korsakov, & Opera North stages a seldom-seen Shostakovich. Peter Hall directs Glyndebourne's first-ever *Otello*.**

**ROYAL OPERA**

Covent Garden, WC2 (020 7304 4000).

**The Kirov Opera** The celebrated company, under Valery Gergiev's dynamic leadership, returns to Covent Garden with the first London staging of Rimsky-Korsakov's greatest opera, *The Invisible City of Kitezh*, & new productions of *La traviata* & *Macbeth* (directed by David McVicar) for this year's Verdi centenary. July 9-21

**SADLER'S WELLS**

Rosebery Ave, EC1 (020 7863 8000).

**Paradise Moscow** This rare 1958 work by Shostakovich is a satirical romp set in a housing project in post-Stalinist Moscow. For director David Pountney, who also provides the translation for this Opera North production, this



**Till death do us part: this summer's Glyndebourne offerings include Graham Vick's *Le nozze di Figaro*, above, and Harrison Birtwhistle's *The Last Supper*, below.**

belongs in the tradition of irreverent operetta alongside Offenbach & Gilbert & Sullivan. May 23-26

**GLYNDEBOURNE FESTIVAL OPERA** Glyndebourne, Lewes, E Sussex (01273 813 813)

**A Midsummer Night's Dream** Peter Hall revives his acclaimed production of Britten's work, with David Atherton conducting. In repertory from May 21.

**Le nozze di Figaro** Louis Langree restages last year's production by Graham Vick, with designs by Richard Hudson. In repertory from June 10.

**The Makropulos Case** Nikolaus Lehnhoff's celebrated production has Anja Silja returning as Emilia Marty. In repertory from June 29

**Otello** Glyndebourne's first-ever staging of Verdi's work is directed by Peter Hall with designs by John Gunther. In repertory from July 21

**The Last Supper** Harrison Birtwhistle's retelling of Christian history is directed by Martin Duncan with Elgar Howarth conducting. In repertory from Aug 4. The season runs until Aug 26

## THE ELECTRIFYING CONDUCTOR

Anyone who saw the Kirov Opera's production of Prokofiev's *War and Peace* at the Royal Opera House last year will know how conductor Valery Gergiev can not only hold together such a sprawling epic, but also work the Kirov's collective socks off to dynamic effect.

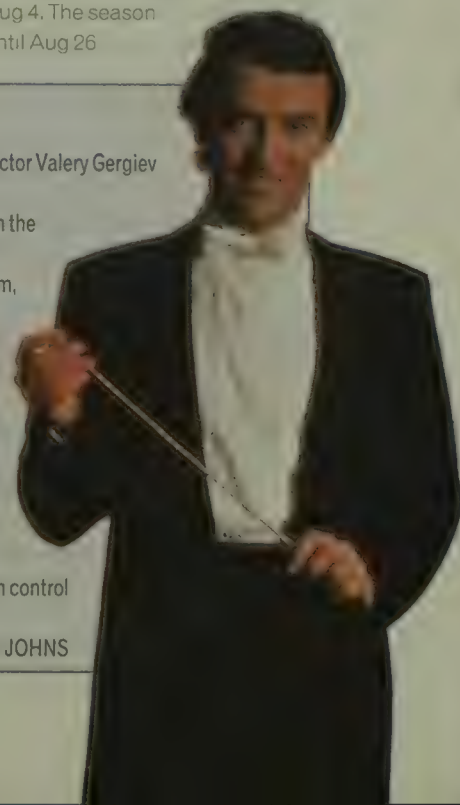
The company, which returns to the Royal Opera House in June for a summer residency, still has the largest ensemble of singers in the world (more than 80), including such established stars as mezzo-sopranos Olga Borodina and Larissa Diadkova, and tenor Gegam Gregorian. They can all command higher fees in the West but always return to the company. This is partly out of loyalty and patriotism, but also due to the hypnotic power of Gergiev, who was appointed artistic director of the company in 1988 when he was only 35.

He's a driven man, with posts all over the world (including New York and Rotterdam), who runs the Kirov with an iron, but inspiring, will. It's said that he once met an English conductor who had just announced a six-month sabbatical. To Gergiev's puzzled questioning of what that meant, he was told to take an afternoon off to see how he liked it. Gergiev said he was too busy.

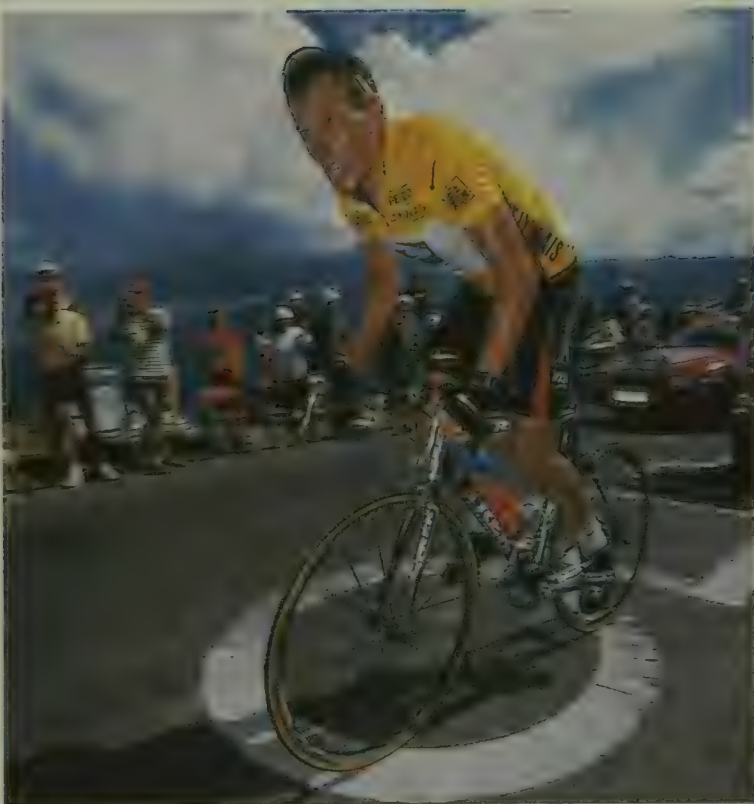
He's also planning for the Kirov's future. Having established the Maryinsky Academy in 1998, which takes in about 15 singers a year, aged between 21 and 27, on two- or three-year contracts, Gergiev is also ensuring that the Kirov has plenty of promising newcomers. For Larissa Diadkova, it's important to maintain traditional Russian teaching methods and their notions of apprenticeship and promotion, of which she is a product, and make sure that the "globalisation" of opera doesn't mean "what is distinctively Russian about a singer will be eroded".

London audiences will soon be able to enjoy the Kirov's distinctive approach—an expressive expansiveness and the kind of breath control that can take your breath away.

IAN JOHNS







## sport

In view of the recent epidemic of foot-&-mouth disease, it is advisable to check with the organisers before attending any of the events listed below

The grass courts of Wimbledon provide a perfect setting for typical English summer pleasures. Cricket fans will be looking forward to Test matches against Pakistan & Australia, & horse-racing enthusiasts will be trying to pick winners for the Derby & the Ascot Gold Cup.

### CRICKET

England's improved form means that Nasser Hussain's team is strongly fancied against Pakistan & might even manage a draw with Jason Gillespie's visiting Australia squad

**England v Pakistan** 1st Test May 17-21, Lord's, NW8; 2nd Test May 31-June 4, Old Trafford, Manchester. (Ticketline 0990 33 88 55)

**England v Australia** 1st Test July 5-9, Edgbaston, Birmingham (Ticketline 0990 33 88 55)

For Test match information visit [www.ecb.co.uk](http://www.ecb.co.uk)

**Benson & Hedges Cup** Final July 14, Lord's, NW8 (020 7432 1066)

Every one a winner: Lance Armstrong, above, pedals to keep his title in the Tour de France; last year's Wimbledon victors Pete Sampras, above right, and Venus Williams, below right, will be back on ace form; England batsmen Michael Vaughan and Graeme Hick, below, unite to challenge Pakistan and Australia.



### CYCLING

**Tour de France** The 3,462km of the world's most famous cycle race includes some tough sections in Belgium this year. Britain's David Millar & Germany's Jan Ulrich are strong contenders to challenge last year's victor, American cyclist Lance Armstrong. July 7-29. Prologue July 7, Dunkerque; start July 8, St-Omer; finish July 29, Paris (0161 230 2301). [www.letour.fr](http://www.letour.fr)

### HORSE RACING

#### Vodafone Oaks & Coronation Cup

June 8; **Vodafone Derby** Britain's most prestigious flat-racing classic, run on Epsom Downs since 1780. June 9. Epsom, Surrey (01372 470047) [www.epsomderby.co.uk](http://www.epsomderby.co.uk)

**Royal Ascot** The royal family's carriage procession takes place each day of the meeting at 2pm. Those more concerned with hats than horseflesh will enjoy the exotic fashions to be seen on Gold Cup day (June 21), also known as "Ladies' Day". June 19-22. Ascot, Berks (01344 622211).

### MOTOR SPORT

**British Grand Prix** Though Michael Schumacher already looks unstoppable, Britain's David Coulthard & Jensen Button are expected to give the German driver a run for his money. July 15. Silverstone, nr Towcester, Northants (01753 681736).

### ROWING

**Henley Royal Regatta** Some of Britain's Olympic champions are likely to be competing at this high-profile event, in its picturesque, rural setting. July 4-8. Henley-on-Thames, Oxon (01491 571113). [www.hrr.co.uk](http://www.hrr.co.uk)

### SAILING

**Skandia Life Cowes Week** A festival atmosphere pervades at this sailing regatta, which this year sees participation from some of the world's largest yachts. Vessels to look out for



include Mike Slade's radical 90ft monohull, *Leopard*; Ludde Ingvall's maxi *Nicorette*; Agnelli's *Stealth*; & Neville Crichton's *Shockwave*. August 4-11. Cowes, Isle of Wight (01983 295744). [www.cowesweek.co.uk](http://www.cowesweek.co.uk)

### TENNIS

America's Pete Sampras & Venus Williams start as favourites to retain their singles titles at Wimbledon, after practice at tournaments in Birmingham, Nottingham & Eastbourne.

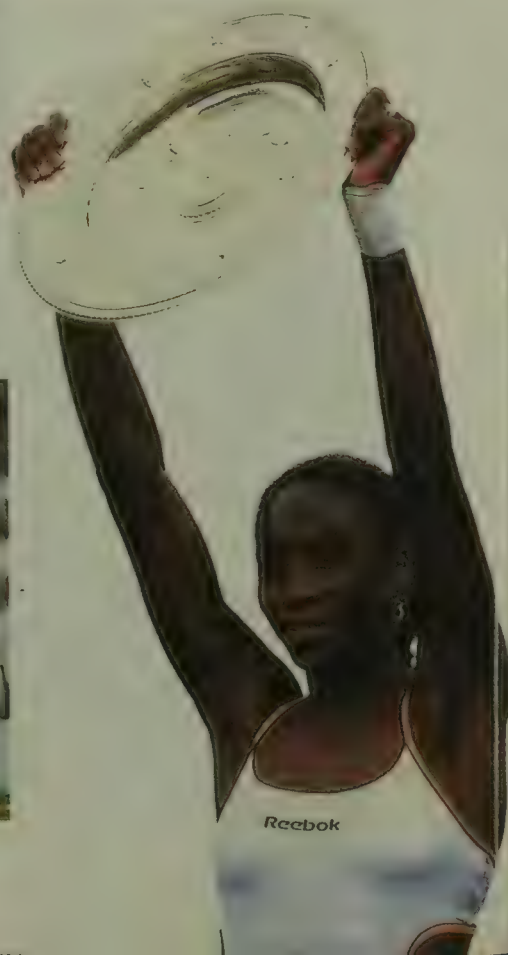
**DFS Classic (ladies)** June 11-17. Edgbaston Priory Club, Birmingham (0870 909 3015).

**Nottingham Open (men)** June 18-23. City of Nottingham Tennis Centre, Nottingham (0870 909 3015).

**Direct Line International Ladies' Tennis Championships** June 18-23. Devonshire Park, Eastbourne (01323 412000).

**The Championships** June 25-July 8. All England Club, Wimbledon, SW19 (020 8946 2244).

Information on all tournaments from [www.lta.org.uk](http://www.lta.org.uk)





## exhibitions

As well as presenting its glorious annual pot-pourri, the Summer Exhibition, the Royal Academy examines the way Ingres & Delacroix influenced the Impressionists & other French artists. The National Gallery shows the landscapes & subtly lit interiors typical of Vermeer & the Delft School, while Tate Britain continues its great Stanley Spencer retrospective & also exhibits the work of 18th-century caricaturist James Gillray.

*Readers are advised to check dates & times before making a special journey.*

### BRITISH MUSEUM

Great Russell St, WC1 (020 7323 8000).

#### Treasury of the World: Jewelled Arts of India in the Age of the Mughals

Extravagant earrings, pendants, finger rings & bracelets, jewelled boxes, cups, gaming pieces & daggers with jewel-encrusted scabbards & hilts make up this collection of around 300 precious pieces dating from the 16th to 18th centuries. May 18-Sept 2. Daily 10am-5.30pm (Thurs & Fri until 8.30pm).

### 54 THE GALLERY

54 Shepherd Market, W1 (07802 409 127).

#### Art of China Today—

##### Between Tradition and

##### Modernity

Humorous & quirky as well as more traditional & spiritual works by Chinese painters Han Jing Ting (whose teacher is the famous Qi Baqi), Ma Haifang & Yuan Wu, all well-known in Beijing & widely exhibited in the Far East. May 28-June 10. Daily except Sun 11am-3pm & 5-8pm.

### NATIONAL GALLERY

Trafalgar Sq, WC2 (020 7747 2885).

Sainsbury Wing:

#### Vermeer & the Delft School

Tranquil scenes of Dutch domestic life by Johannes Vermeer & Pieter de Hooch, who made Delft a thriving & influential centre of art in the 1640s & 50s. June 20-Sept 16. Daily 10am to 6pm (Wed until 9pm). [www.nationalgallery.org.uk](http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk).

### ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

Piccadilly, W1 (020 7300 8000).

**Summer Exhibition** This annual open exhibition is always full of surprises.

BELOW: BRUCE M. WHITE/THE AL. SABAH COLLECTION



The 1,000 works on show—by unknown artists as well as established ones—evoke delight & controversy in equal measure. June 5-Aug 13.

**Ingres to Matisse: Masterpieces in French Painting** Fifty 19th-century & early 20th-century French masterpieces, opening with Ingres & Delacroix (inspiration for Manet, Monet, Degas & Picasso). The exhibition continues with works by Cézanne, Gauguin & Van Gogh, who laid the foundations for the individual approaches of Picasso & Matisse. June 30-Sept 23. Daily 10am-6pm (Fri until 10pm). [www.royalacademy.org.uk](http://www.royalacademy.org.uk).

### TATE BRITAIN

Millbank, SW1 (020 7887 8008).

**Stanley Spencer** Around 100 paintings from public & private collections around the world make up a retrospective of one of Britain's best-loved painters.

Many works from the 1930s, plus nudes & self-portraits, biblical themes set in his beloved village of Cookham & paintings from Spencer's time as a war artist between 1939 & 1945. Until June 24.

#### James Gillray: The Art of Caricature

More than 100 works by the celebrated 18th-century artist whose satirical images of politicians & the royalty of his time are filled with wit & robust vulgarity. June 7-Sept 2.

Daily 10am-5.50pm. [www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk).



SUCCESSION BY H. MATISSE/DACS 2001



The art of the exotic: modern works in a traditional Chinese style are on show at the Art of China Today exhibition, above; exquisite Mughal jewellery glistens at the British Museum, below left; Large Reclining Nude, 1935, by Henri Matisse, is part of the Ingres to Matisse exhibition at the Royal Academy, below.

### VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM

Cromwell Rd, SW7 (020 7942 2000).

**The Victorians** A major exhibition commemorating the centenary of Queen Victoria's death & looking at the lasting legacy of that astonishingly innovative age. Art, empire-building, foreign trade & technological wizardry are explored, as are British society, the role of the royal family & the Victorians' relationship with nature. Until July 29.

**Chihuly at the V&A** Glass installations by Seattle-based Chihuly, the American artist known for his use of rich colour & extravagant, organic shapes, who created the 5m-high chandelier for the museum's entrance hall. June 21-Oct 21.

Daily 10am-5.45pm. [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk).



### OPEN FIREPOWER!

Launching with a bang during a weekend of festivities on May 27-28 is the Royal Artillery's long-awaited museum at Woolwich. In a Victorian building alongside Hawksmoor's Royal Military Academy, the science of gunnery is explained, from slingshot to supergun.

Most impressive is the "Field of Fire", a teeth-rattling virtual battlefield surrounded by tanks, searchlights and assorted guns, which gives an awesome, 20-minute experience of the noise and smoke of real conflict.

In quieter mode, the History and Medal Galleries show the development of artillery from Roman times and tell the story of the regiment's heroes, including that of Gunner Smith, awarded the VC for keeping 20,000 dervish tribesmen at bay with a hand spike. **Firepower! The Royal Arsenal, Warren Lane, Woolwich, SE18** (020 8855 7755).

Daily 10am-5pm. [www.firepower.org.uk](http://www.firepower.org.uk).

ANGELA BIRD



## other events

**Highly polished antiques will lure collectors to Grosvenor House Fair, while equally glossy cars go on show at Canary Wharf & Goodwood. London's great traditions include the Queen's Birthday Parade of Trooping the Colour.**

### CANARY WHARF MOTOR SHOW

The marquees & quaysides around Canary Wharf are filled with displays by top-notch manufacturers, such as Aston Martin & Strathcarron. The latest models on view should include the X-type Jaguar, the Vanquish, the new Mini, the Porsche Carrera 4 & Mercedes-Benz's C-class sports coupé. June 4-9. Mon-Fri 11am-3pm; Sat 11am-5.30pm. Canada Sq & Cabot Sq, E14 (0117 934 9800).

### GROSVENOR HOUSE ART & ANTIQUES FAIR

Some 90 international dealers offer ceramics, glass, oriental works of art, antiquities, paintings, furniture, silver, jewellery, glass, textiles & even garden statuary. The special loan exhibition, "Racing: The Sport of Kings", brings paintings & racing memorabilia from the Royal Collection, including the racing colours of the Queen & the Queen Mother. Social highlight of the fair is the Charity Gala Evening (June 14), in aid of Barnardo's (information from 020 8498 7389). June 13-19. 11am-6pm (Fri, Sun & Wed until 8pm). Le Méridien Grosvenor House, Park Lane, W1 (020 7399 8100).

[www.grosvenor-antiquesfair.co.uk](http://www.grosvenor-antiquesfair.co.uk)

### TROOPING THE COLOUR

In one of London's most stirring traditions, the Queen takes part in a grand procession down The Mall to Horse Guards Parade before reviewing serried, scarlet ranks of soldiers—this year the Nijmegen Company Grenadier Guards. June 16. Departs Buckingham Palace, SW1, 10.40am; parade on Horse Guards 11am-noon; procession returns to Palace about 12.20pm (020 7414 2479).

### MIDSUMMER TUDOR BANQUET

The oak-panelled rooms of this 16th-century house make a perfect backdrop to an evening of Tudor-

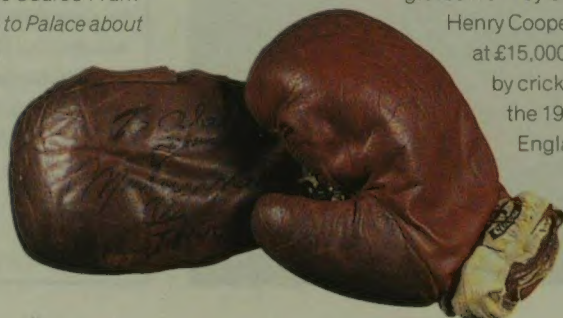
**Pulling power: a Parliamentary tug-of-war makes for amusing viewing at Westminster, below. Bottom, Cassius Clay's boxing gloves are included in the sale of sporting memorabilia at Christie's.**



style food & entertainment. Guests are invited to dress in Elizabethan costume & to tuck into gourd soup, elderflower syllabub & other dishes that Henry VIII might have enjoyed. June 16. 7pm. Sutton House, 2 & 4 Homerton High St, Hackney, E9 (020 8986 2264; box office 01494 755572).

### SPORTING MEMORABILIA

Items up for auction include the boxing gloves worn by Cassius Clay to defeat Henry Cooper in 1963 (estimated at £15,000-20,000), a cap worn by cricketer Ian Chappell on the 1968 Australian Tour of England (around £3,500) & a pair of silver-handled, 19th-century racquets (£3,000-£5,000).



## BLOOMING LONDON

The capital seems almost in danger of disappearing under an avalanche of flowers this summer.

Kew Gardens celebrates the Land of the Rising Sun with the Japanese Garden Festival (May 25-Sept 30). Colourful "carp" kites create a dramatic trail through the gardens to the Japanese Gateway, and visitors can savour true oriental style among six contemporary gardens created from traditional materials by leading Japanese designers. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (020 8332 5655).

Everybody's favourite is London Open Squares Day (June 10), when more than 60 of the capital's private green spaces fling open their gates, allowing passers-by to step in for a privileged peek behind the railings. Among them are 3-acre Edwardes Square, W8 (off Kensington High Street) and Cadogan Square Gardens, SW1 (off Sloane Street). Information from the British Visitor Centre, Lower Regent Street, SW1.

A distinctly funky, urban slant characterises the popular Covent Garden Flower Festival, above (June 20-24), with its theatrical entertainments, artworks that include floral designs and sculptures made from recycled materials. The Piazza, WC2 (09064 701 777).

The real enthusiasts' delight is the enormous Hampton Court Palace Flower Festival (July 3-8; RHS members only on July 3 & 4), held alongside Henry VIII's sumptuous brick palace. It features water gardens, plots inspired by Indian palaces and Mughal designs and the British Rose Festival. Hampton Court Palace, East Molesey, Surrey (020 7649 1885).

ANGELA BIRD



June 22. 10.30am & 2pm. Christie's South Kensington, 85 Old Brompton Rd, SW7 (020 7581 7611).

[www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)

### LORDS V COMMONS TUG-OF-WAR

After a match between schools & a match between Army teams, sporting participants from both Houses of Parliament—first women & then men—gather outside the Palace of Westminster to test their strength in aid of the Macmillan Cancer Relief Fund. June 25. 6.45pm. Abingdon Green, SW1 (020 7795 0055).

### GOODWOOD FESTIVAL OF SPEED

The great names of motor racing, from Stirling Moss & Jack Brabham to some of today's Formula 1 drivers—along with the stars of Indy & motorbike racing—don their helmets to recapture the excitement of motor racing's heyday. As well as picnics in the beautiful, downland setting, visitors can enjoy close-up views of the cars on Friday; watch the official practice & a children's festival of speed on Saturday; & see the cars do their timed hill-climbs, plus the judging of Cartier's "Style et Luxe" design competition for the most elegantly designed car on Sunday. July 6-8. 9am-6pm. Goodwood House, nr Chichester, W Sussex (01243 755055).

LISTINGS COMPILED BY  
IAN JOHNS & ANGELA BIRD



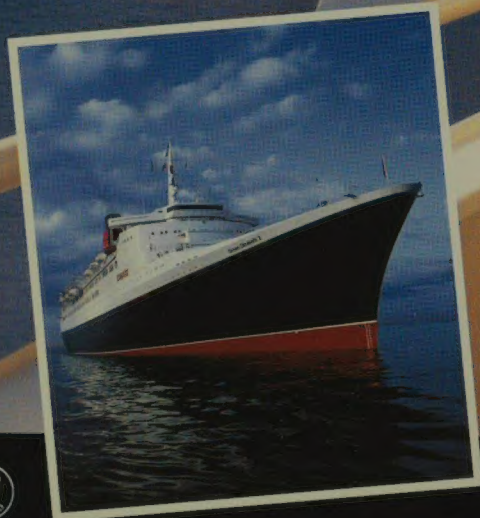


  
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